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JANUARY 1993

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CHANDAMAMA

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NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 23 FEBRUARY 1993 No. 8

THE MAGIC PALACE: Mahendranath, now a gatekeeper at the Magic Palace, identifies one of the girls coming to the garden every evening as Princess Vidyavati. He even manages to talk to her and know her wish to escape. They leave the Palace hours before she is expected to travel in a palanquin at the behest of the master of the place. But the palanquin does not go empty. Is someone impersonating the princess? Or does the palanquin pick up the princess on the way?

VEER HANUMAN: Vibhishana sees through Indrajit's game and assures Rama and Lakshmana that it was a fake Sita that he killed in his chariot before he went back to complete his yaga to acquire more magical powers. Rama sends Lakshmana to prevent Indrajit from successfully completing the yaga. Vibhishana accompanies him. Indrajit is taken by surprise and has now to face Lakshmana on ground. Indrajit appeals to Vibhishana to leave the enemy and come back to Lanka. Vibhishana gives him a piece of advice, but Indrajit is not one to accept it. Fight he will, at any cost.

PLUS a well-known Malayalam story by Vaikom Muhammad Bashir under **INDIA THROUGH HER LITERATURE**, and all your favourite features.

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Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI



Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

The Religion of Love

The year 1993 is of great significance to India and Indians, as it marks the hundredth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's *tapas* on a rock at the confluence of the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea in Kanyakumari, and his speech at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, which opened the eyes of the world to the teachings of Hinduism.

It is said that when he rose to speak, he saluted the large audience in front of him rather than the dignitaries seated on the dais. He addressed them as 'Sisters and Brothers of America'. Those memorable first words electrified everyone in the auditorium. As he spoke, he transformed a whole generation of not only Americans, but all thinking men and women the world over.

Swamiji looked at them with love; he ~~saluted~~ ~~them~~ ~~with~~ ~~love~~. He told them that men are equal and there are no differences between them, whichever society they belonged to, whatever religion they believed in. "It is when half-a-dozen people learn to love (each other) that a new religion begins"—he had said on an earlier occasion. The religion of love.

This sentiment was echoed in the years to come when Gandhiji led the Indians in South Africa in their struggle against White imperialism there and later his own countrymen in their fight for freedom. He saw India one, and all Indians as brothers, to instil in them a new faith and a rare courage to make supreme sacrifices to attain independence.

It is forty-six years since India became a free nation; almost the same number of years since the Father of the Nation passed away from our midst. And we who survived him today are still searching for ways to achieve unity among the people.

Swamiji's words still ring in our ears: "We, of all nations, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is always on our head, and therefore we live!" But the time has come for us to be conquerors—to conquer the ego in us and see us in other men's eyes.

Chandamama wishes all its readers a very happy New Year!



LET US KEEP ALOFT THE BANNER OF UNITY

It was 45 years ago that your magazine, **Chandamama**, was launched. That was an eventful time. On the one hand, our people had come to the end of a long fight against foreign rule; on the other hand, they had been compelled to agree to a division of the great country into India and Pakistan.

That was also a great time when Indians looked forward to a bright future. They believed that the evil days of both foreign oppression and communal hatred had been left behind, and what lay ahead was an era of peace and unity, of progress and prosperity.

Was it such a faith nothing but a day-dream? Was the hope of all the martyrs and sufferers in vain?

We cannot but dispute all the unfortunate happenings of our time; despite religious and politics trying to raise walls inside our hearts. For, above all the religion is the truth that we all are children of God; above all the politics is the truth that we are Indians. We have to realise this unless we decide to run ourselves and block the future of the generations to come after us.

God has ordained to give us to see God in every being and to cultivate love for all. In Islam, Prophet Muhammad says: "The action dearest to God most high is: love for God (Allah) (love). Love for me." Then shall love thy neighbour as thyself." Which religion, then, are we serving when we persist in hating each other? We are not serving any religion, but only our ignorance.

Your magazine symbolises the unity in diversity in India. It serves the children of India with the same joys and the same food for thought in so many languages. That is what is dear to me the magazine to see the banner of India's unity lowered by communal forces. Indeed, this is only a temporary pitfall in India's history. It must disappear. The friends — you the readers of **Chandamama** — must see to it that it does. And let us start once again, clasp hands and face the turbulent weather of our time.

— J. K. Puri

*Chandamama's Guide
to the World of the 1990s*



THE GREAT GUARDIANS

(This section is devoted to ecology and environment)

The Himalaya is described by our great poet Kalidasa ■ *Manadanda* or the status-post of the earth. Indeed, great mountains stand like sentinels over the continents. Not only are they the source of life-giving rivers; they are, along with the forests, the protectors of our lands.

How? Well, while the mountains and forests attract water, preserve it, and supply it through numerous streams on ■ regular basis, the forests keep the rocks bound to one another so that the rocky soil does not flow along with the rivers. What will happen if it does? The level of the river-beds will be raised; as ■ result, at the time of monsoon, when the rivers must contain water, it will overflow in all the directions and submerge crop-fields and villages.

The mountains have ■ great role in making the climate what it is. They have, through the ages, given us much wealth by yielding minerals, precious stones including the diamond, and excellent slabs of stones, like granite and marble, for building monuments and sculptures.

But the time has come when we must be very careful about our mountains. Earlier, we have discussed the difference between mountains and hills. The hills are spread over greater parts of the world. Many of them have simply disappeared or have been disfigured because their stones have proved useful for our immediate needs. But do we always know why Nature had erected them, of what use they were in securing a balance in the earth's atmosphere? Besides, don't they deprive our villages and towns of their natural beauty?

THERE WAS ONCE A LARGE COMMUNITY OF MICE WHICH SETTLED AND LIVED HAPPILY IN SOME DRAPIDATED HOUSES IN AN OLD CITY.



ONE DAY...

MY GOD! A HERD OF ELEPHANTS!

THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY! WE'RE LOST!



OH! RUN! RUN! OH!
OH!

WE'RE FINISHED!



THOUSANDS OF MICE ARE CRUSHED TO DEATH BY THE ELEPHANTS

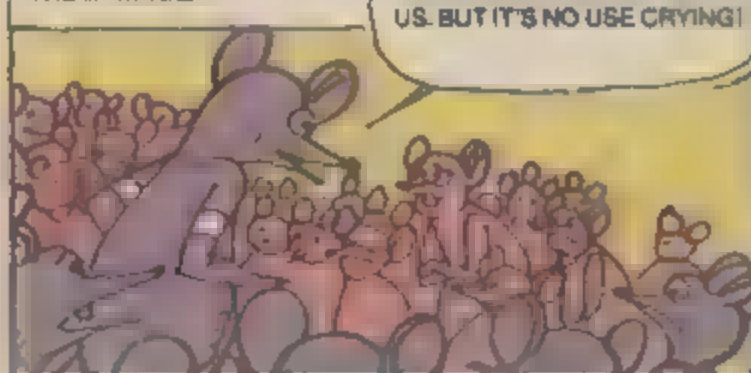
OH MY GOD!
OH! RUN!

OH! HAA!



SOMETIME AFTER THE ELEPHANTS HAVE DONE ALL THE DAMAGE

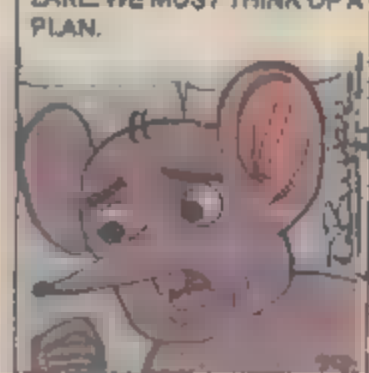
MY FRIENDS! A TERRIBLE DISASTER HAS BEFALLEN US. BUT IT'S NO USE CRYING!



WE MUST DO SOMETHING.

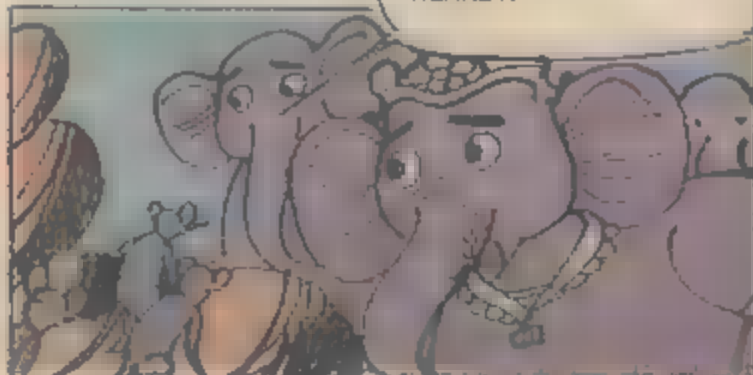


THE ELEPHANTS WILL SOON RETURN FROM THE LAKE. WE MUST THINK OF A PLAN.



माने तपसि शौर्ये वा विजाने विनये नये ।
विस्मयो नहि कर्तव्यो नानारत्ना वसुन्धरा । ।

THE MICE ■■■ A DELEGA-
TION TO THE KING OF
ELEPHANTS.



O! MIGHTY KING! ■■■ LIVE
NEARBY.

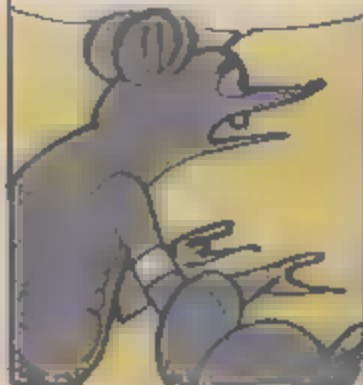
THOUSANDS OF MICE HAVE
BEEN CRUSHED TO DEATH
BY YOU, SIR.



... WHILE YOU WERE COM-
ING HERE.



IF YOU ■■■ THAT WAY
AGAIN, SIR.



... NOT EVEN ONE MOUSE
WILL BE LEFT ALIVE



THEN, WHAT DO YOU WANT
US TO DO?



BE MERCIFUL AND ALLOW
US TO LIVE. WE MAY BE OF
SOME USE TO YOU SOME
DAY.



OH HOI
OH HOI
OH HOI



ALL RIGHT! WE WON'T
COME THAT WAY. YOU MAY
GO!



SOMETIME LATER.. THE ELE-
PHANT KING AND MOST OF HIS
ATTENDANTS ARE TRAPPED
BY HUNTERS..



We need not marvel at the examples of honour, talent, heroism, knowledge or humility, for the world abounds in such gems of excellent examples.

AFTER SOME
TIME...

WHO CAN FREE US?

AH! I SHALL SEND A MES-
SENGER TO THE MICE.

AT THE PLACE WHERE THE
MICE LIVED...

I'VE COME TO SEEK YOUR
HELP.

OUR HELP?

YES! OUR KING AND SOME
OF HIS FOLLOWERS HAVE
BEEN TRAPPED.

WE'RE ALWAYS READY TO
HELP FRIENDS.

THE MICE RUN TO RESCUE
THE ELEPHANTS, GNAW
THE ROPES THAT HAVE
BOUND THEM, AND FREE
THEM...

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU,
VERY MUCH!

CHITRANGA CONCLUDES
THE STORY.

THAT'S HOW THE MICE
RESCUED THE ELEPHANTS.
I, THEREFORE, SAY, MAKE
FRIENDS WITH EVERYBODY.

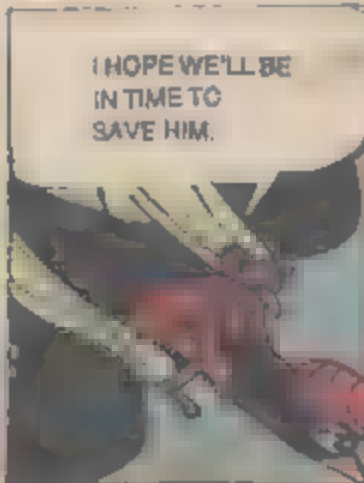
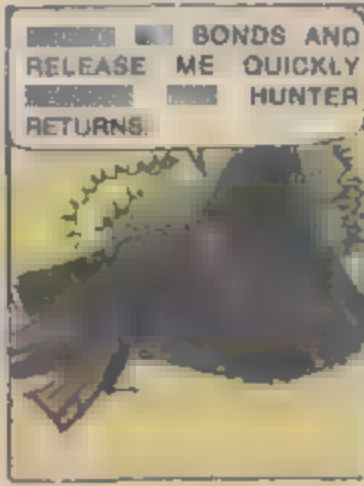
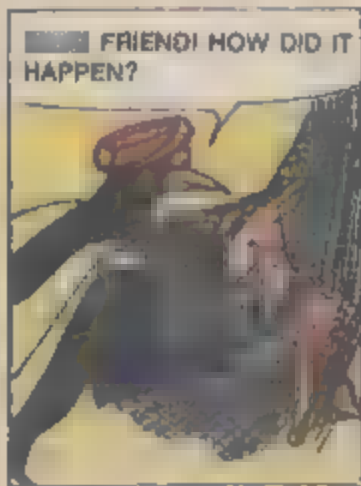
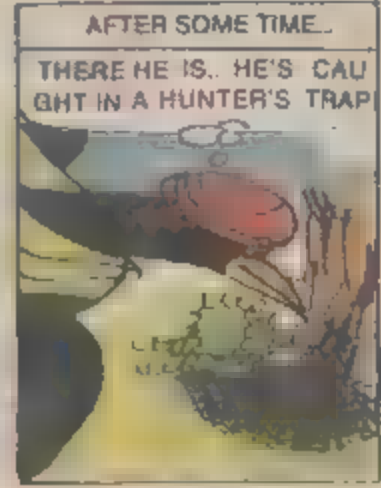
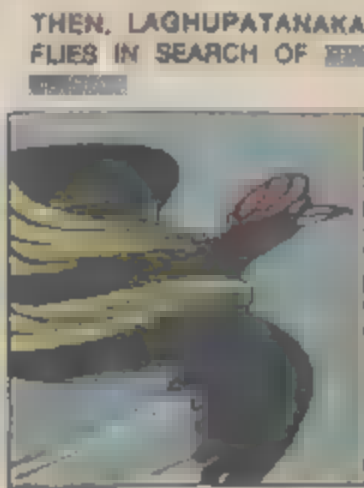
WE AGREE WITH YOU. FROM
NOW ON, WE'RE FRIENDS
YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS.

THE FOUR FRIENDS LIVE
HAPPILY. ONE DAY...

WHERE'S OUR FRIEND CHI-
TRANGA? WE HAVEN'T
SEEN HIM FOR SOME TIME!

I'M AFRAID CHITRANGA
MAY BE IN TROUBLE.

जातस्य नदीतीरे तस्यापि तृणस्य जन्मसाफल्यम्
यत् सलिलमज्जनाकुलजनहस्तालम्बनं भवति ।



To continue...

Even the existence of a grass on the river bank can become significant if by holding on to it a drowning man can be saved.

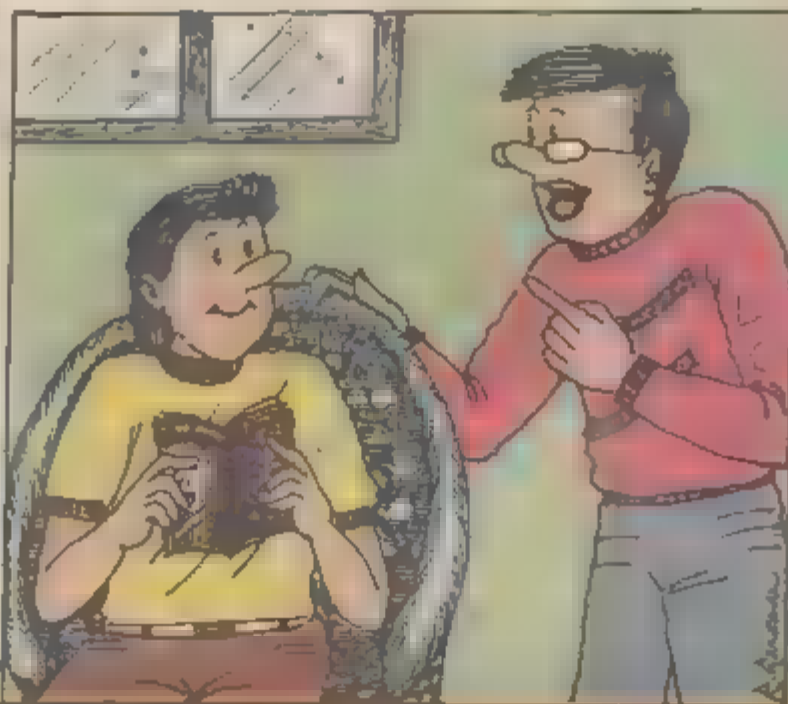
Penny-worth thrill(er)

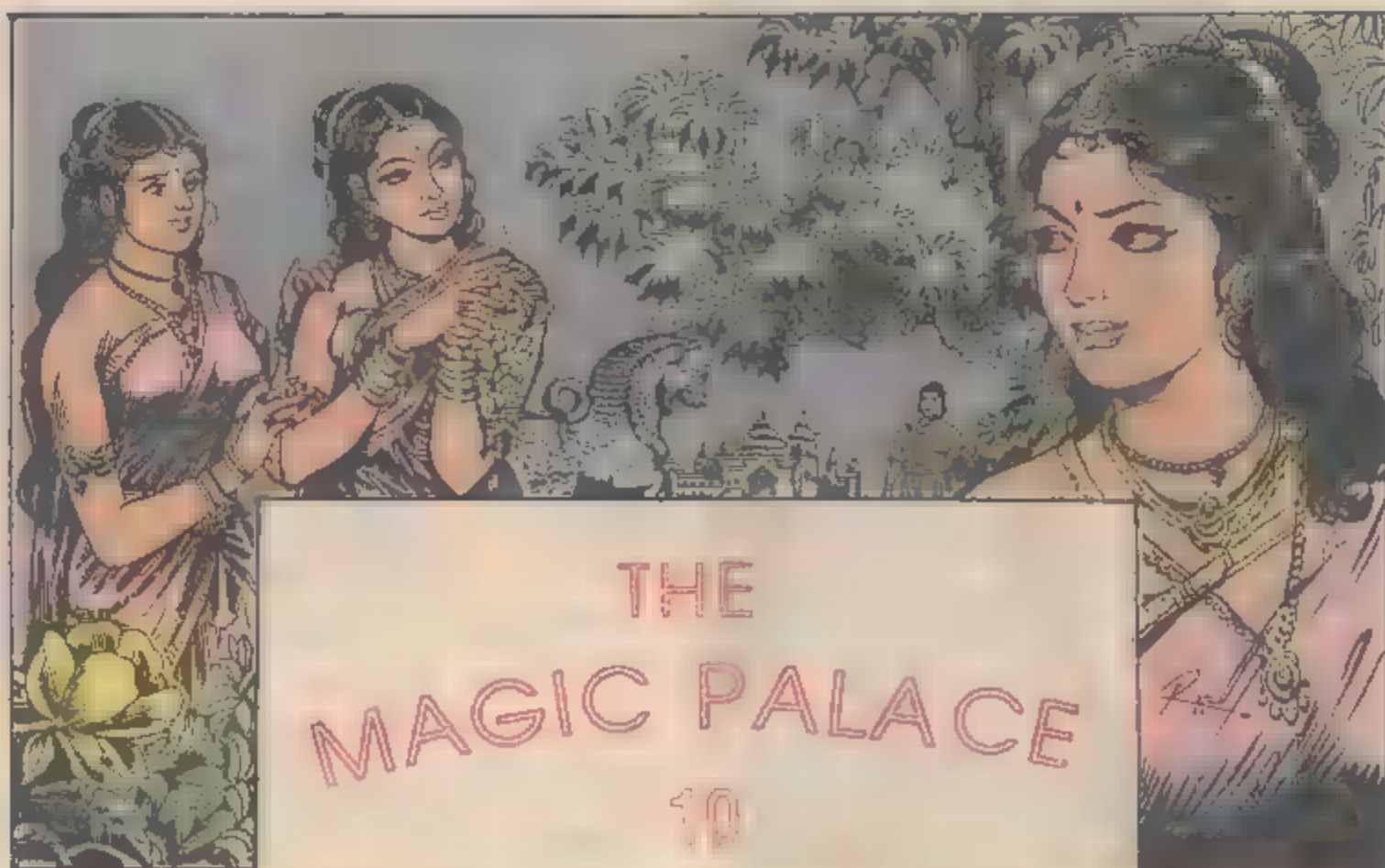
The Christmas holidays were on. It was too cold outside. Otherwise, Jyotiranjana Biswal of Dhenkanal would have liked to go and meet his friend, as they had planned. He lazily picked up a book that was lying around and began reading it. It was a true story, which at one time had become sensational and had a mixture of violence, crime, and adventure. He did not realise the passage of time till his friend barged in. "Hey! You're still here? What're you reading?" Jyotiranjana mentioned the title and the author. "It's a penny dreadful!" he heard his friend mutter in disdain. The two friends went out, and when Jyotiranjana returned home later and picked up the book again, he wondered what his friend meant by his remark. 'Penny dreadful' merely means a cheap sensational thriller, not of the Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot class, but which can be bought for a penny, or a few "naya paise" in India.

Sadasivan Pillai of Palayamkotta has noted in the dictionary that the word 'Samaritan' means someone generous

and ready to help others in distress. His doubt is, why the word is generally qualified with the adjective 'good.' The word literally means an inhabitant of Samaria, in ancient Palestine. The Bible (St. Luke, Chapter X) tells us the story, as narrated by Jesus Christ, of a man who was attacked by robbers and left half dead. Two men went that way, one after the other. Both of them saw the man on the road, but did not stop and "walked on by". Then came a Samaritan (from Samaria). When he saw the man, his heart welled up with pity. He cleaned the man's injuries, bandaged them, put him on his donkey, and took him to an inn. The next morning, he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper to take care of him and promised some money on his return, in case the innkeeper had spent more on the man. The Bible has this parable

of the good Samaritan and ever since then, the word has become synonymous with a person willing to help anyone in difficulty. We, too, can be Samaritans, let's say, good Indians!





(While in Veergiri, everybody is anxiously awaiting news of the missing princess, King Veerasen is confident that Mahendranath, with his determination, might be the one to succeed in his mission to trace Vidyavati. Meanwhile, he has managed to secure the job of a gate-keeper at the magic palace where he comes to know the master has an important woman visitor.)

The next day, Mahendranath started for his post rather early. Every now and then, he would take a glance at the garden. Three girls came into the garden, all of them looking alike. They walked together, most of the time silently. He was unable to single out the young lady of the previous evening, till one of the

girls went away. The other two sat on a bench for a while. Then, one of them began walking up and down among the flowering plants. Once her face was turned towards him, Mahendranath guessed she must be the same young woman.

He hid behind a tree. Once or twice she came almost up to the

THE ESCAPE



fringe of the garden. The next time she came up to the pathway, Mahendranath took courage and called out, though in a whisper, "Princess Vidyavati!"

The young lady looked up, but failed to notice the source of the voice and retraced her steps. She was now walking briskly, and when she came near him, Mahendranath once again called out her name. She stared at the tree in front of her for a while and went back.

When the young lady came again, Mahendranath made himself partly visible and he called out

to her a third time. She looked surprised, but put her finger to her lips as if to caution him against speaking aloud. By then the second girl had joined the other, and looking at the sky, she said something. The young lady just made it up to the tree merely to whisper, "Tomorrow!" before joining the girls.

Though he was disappointed over her sudden departure, Mahendranath was happy that he had come across someone who might be either Vidyavati herself or who could give him some news of the missing princess.

That night he remained vigilant, especially because the room upstairs where he saw light was once again different from the ones he had noticed the previous two nights. He was by now certain that the women, including the young lady, never went back to the rooms they occupied the previous night.

However, what intrigued him most was, the girls were all attired in the same kind of dress, of the same colour, and wore identical jewellery. If it was not for hiding a person's identity, then what would be the purpose of such camouflage?

Soon afterwards, his friend came there. "I didn't see you the whole day," remarked Mahendranath. "Were you so busy at the other gate?"

"Yes, I couldn't move from there till evening," he replied. "Some more *pundits* have arrived. I had to be at the gate to let them in as and when they came. I saw them all go into my master's room in the evening. It looks ■ though these *pundits* will be here for at least one or two days and they're going to keep my master busy. But better be on your guard. Nobody can take him for granted."

"Oh! ■ shall be on my guard, my friend," he assured the gatekeeper.

The next morning, in the dining hall, Mahendranath for the second time saw two girls enter the kitchen and soon go out with trays of food. They were not accompanied by the old woman. As usual, they looked very much alike.

As advised by his friend, Mahendranath proceeded to the gate even before it was noon. The prospect of meeting the young lady and the possibility of learning ■ about her and of the mysterious place made him excited.

The lady came into the garden quite early. Today, there was only one girl with her—might be one of the two he had seen in the morning. The young lady wore the same kind of dress as that of the girl. The two walked up and down the garden, for some time. When the girl went and sat down on one of the benches, the young lady slowed down her pace and looked up among the trees as if she was expecting to see someone there.

As she came towards him a second time, he revealed himself. "I'm Mahendranath from Veergiri. Princess...?" The young lady nodded her head, and slowly went back to the other end of the garden. When she came back, she proceeded straight to the tree where she had seen the young ■ hiding. She spoke very softly. "Yes, I'm Vidyavati. I wish to go away from here." The girl on the bench was quite unaware of their meeting.

Now that Vidyavati could, without arousing any suspicion in her companion, walk up to the tree, Mahendranath did not have to come out of hiding. "We all know that you've been kidnapped, princess, but who's he?"



"I don't know. The old lady seems to know something...."

"Who's she? Where is she...?"

"Calls herself Kamala; she's almost like old Kamala at the palace. I too haven't seen her since yesterday!"

"And who're the girls?"

"Oh! There're several of them; they all look alike!"

"Don't they tell you anything?"

"I find them tight-lipped. It looks like some conspiracy. I want to escape before any harm comes to me!"

By the time this much conver-

sation took place, they saw the girl getting up from the bench to greet the one who had just then joined her. When Vidyavati came again, she did not go up to the tree at all, but raised her face as if to bid good-bye to Mahendranath. The two girls led her back to the mansion.

Mahendranath went up the pathway to find out to which room they were taking the young lady. When he saw the lights go up, he realised it was not the room where he had seen light the previous day. His mind was at work furiously and he wanted time to contemplate any action on his part.

He was now happy and contented that he had not only traced the missing princess but was able to meet her and know her mind. How and when could he help her to escape from the mansion? He could easily let her out by the gate he guarded, when she came into the garden in the evening. But she was never alone and was invariably escorted by the old woman or those girls. They might notice her absence and raise a hue and cry. So, the escape would have to be at a time when it would be the least noticed.

But who had brought her to that mysterious place? The 'master' whom he had seen at a distance—had he kidnapped her himself or did he rescue her from the real kidnapper? If so, why did he not arrange to send her back to Veergiri all these days? And if he had not brought her there by force, why is she surrounded by women who were behaving with her equally mysteriously? Fortunately, no bodily harm had come to her and she had no idea who her kidnapper was. Even if he succeeded in taking her out of the mansion, how would they find their way through the jungle?

All these thoughts raced through his mind. Before he could himself find the answers, his friend came there. "Had a tiresome day?" he made a simple enquiry with Mahendranath.

"No, not at all!" he assured the gate-keeper. "I came here early enough as you had advised, and nothing much happened though. Of course, I saw some womenfolk in the garden," he added casually.

"Womenfolk? Have you seen them earlier?" asked the gate-keeper, curiously.

"No, I don't think I ever saw



them," replied Mahendranath. "They were in the garden only for a short while."

"Ah! You may not see them after tomorrow, if what I heard is true." The gate-keeper evidently had news for Mahendranath. "The *pundits* have started leaving, and I was told that my master has ordered the palanquin to be brought tomorrow. It must be for his lady visitor who had come to consult him about her bad period."

Mahendranath knew that as far as he could guess, the 'visitor' might be Princess Vidyavati, who



till then was not aware of an impending journey by palanquin. Something had to be done to inform her and, if she wished not to undertake that journey, he must also help her leave the mansion otherwise. He wondered whether he should take his friend the gate-keeper into confidence. He decided against it for the time being. Instead, he decided to reach the princess in the night to alert her about the prospect of ■ journey the next day.

He kept ■ watch for the lights in the rooms upstairs and the time they were being put out. In one

room, the light was on for a long time. Sometime after that was also extinguished, Mahendranath slowly made his way up the verandah to the main door. He found it closed. In the faint moonlight, he groped for the handle and softly turned it once or twice. It would not open. He was about to traverse the verandah in search of another door, when he thought he would give it another try. This time he gave a jerk to the handle with his left hand and the door opened without any noise.

He entered ■ short passage which led him to ■ narrow verandah which stretched to his left as well as right. Not a soul was in sight, though he could hear the sound of some activity from ■ distance, presumably in another part of the building. Where could be ■ staircase that would take him upstairs? Which way should he turn? He took a minute to decide and then turned left. After ■ few yards, he saw a flight of stairs and climbed them in a trice, and came to a narrow verandah, like the one downstairs. There were rooms along the verandah. He tried the doors one after another. They all remained closed, but he found

that when he ran his left palm along the panels at the middle, they gave way and opened inwards.

He entered one room and there was no one inside though he thought he did see a shadow. He stood still for a second. The shadow too stopped moving. When he moved, the shadow also moved. It took him another second to realise that he was looking at his own reflection in a mirror in front! But, then, that was not the only mirror. The room had mirrors all around. The many reflections he saw of himself gave him an eerie feeling.

The next room was also empty, except for similar mirrors all around. The third room was *not* empty; there were several girls sleeping on ornamented, decorated cots. He could not make out how many were there exactly, till his eyes travelled along the walls and he saw the mirrors and the reflections in them. Could the princess be one of them? He made a mental calculation of the room where he had seen lights earlier and decided to try one or two more rooms where he thought he might find the princess.

The next room had a few

women in white sleeping on cots. It did not take him long to surmise that there might be at the most two, and the others were just reflections in the mirror. The fifth room he entered had again girls lying on decorated cots, but he soon discovered that there were actually only two of them, and both looked alike. As usual, the mirrors on the walls played the trick, giving him the feeling that there were many. Mahendranath concluded that one of them could be Vidyavati, and he tried his best to distinguish her features. Wonder of wonders! When he went near one of them, there was a sudden glow on his left palm. It was only then that he realised the glow had come from the ring he was wearing. Did the ring also help him open the doors? he wondered.

He touched the girl by her shoulders and she woke up. She easily recognised the person standing in front of her, and hastily got up from the bed without making any noise and followed him outside the room.

"Mahendranath! How did you come here?"

"I shall tell you all that later. I came to tell you that a palanquin

is being arranged to take you away tomorrow!"

"Palanquin? Where will I be taken? Veergiri?"

"I've no idea, princess, but do you wish to go with them?"

"No, I want to go back to my parents. Will you help me?"

"Why not? I had taken the king's permission to search for you and rescue you. In fact, he had let me know that you've a birthmark on your right shoulder. Am I right?"

Vidyavati nodded.

"You can depend on me, princess. I'm the gate-keeper at the garden-side."

"We can let ourselves out, can't we? Let's go even now!"

"Yes, but aren't you afraid to come out now?"

"No, Mahendranath. I've greater fear of what might happen to me if I remained here till to-

morrow morning. If you're with me, I shall have no fear. Come on, let's not waste any time!"

"As you wish, princess. You may follow me at a slight distance, and please walk softly. The door to the garden is open. Can you find your way to the pathway? There isn't much light outside."

"I'll manage. I know the way."

Mahendranath waited at the pathway. Princess Vidyavati soon joined him. They both heaved a sigh of relief, as nobody had noticed their escape.

Mahendranath opened the gate and allowed the princess to go out first. After he had let himself out, he managed to fix the lock from outside.

"Where do we go? And how?"

These questions from Vidyavati now aroused him to reality.

—To continue



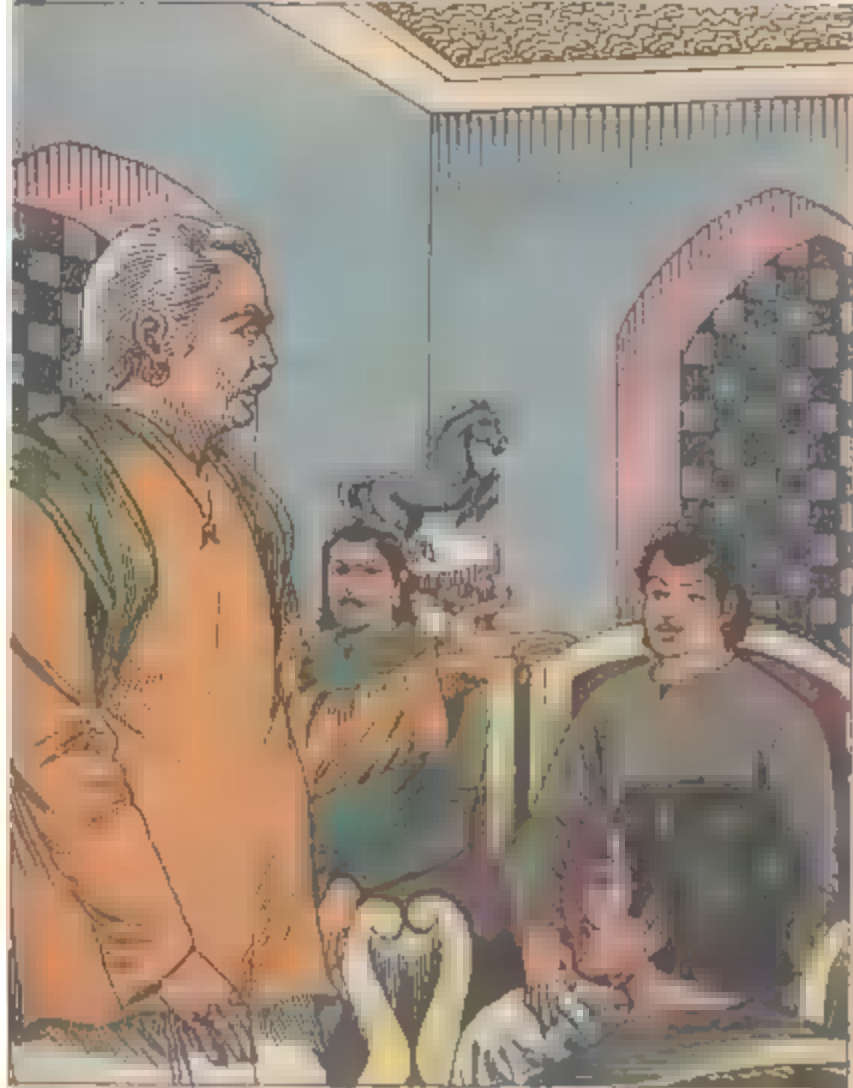


New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

Besides Selfishness

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, you seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying a comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. I admire your tenacity,



and feel that you might ultimately achieve your objective. There are people who, after failing to achieve their ambition, leave it to their sons to complete his mission, but without success. I'm only afraid, something like that might happen in your case ■ well. Listen to the story of Roopchand, and you may be forewarned."

Long ago, Roopchand was ■ prosperous merchant of Roopnagar. He made a lot of profit in his business, and came to possess much wealth. Naturally, his relations frequented him and

took away whatever they wanted. Fortunately for them, he had a mind to help whoever approached him. His relatives found him gullible and smothered him with flattery before they borrowed money from him. Of course, they never took similar care to return the loans. He saw through their game only when he became old.

Roopchand had three sons—Anand, Vinod, and Vivek. One day, he called them to his room. "A merchant must have not only salesmanship but resourcefulness to achieve his ambition. I realised this rather late in life. I took pity on our people and unhesitatingly gave them whatever they asked for, so much so, we have lost much of our wealth. What we had in crores once has now been reduced to lakhs—all because our relations cheated us. I wish to tell you something. Will you do as per my advice?"

All three of them politely told him, "Father, ■ merchant will necessarily have to be selfish. We were wary of your generosity to our relations. We're only happy that you have at least now realised how over-generous you were in

dealing with them. Anyway, whatever you wish to say, we shall abide by that."

Roopchand was happy when he heard this from his sons. "People attribute our misfortune to our house which, they say, is an accursed place. You know very well how I built it with my hard-earned money. This house is my life, and I wish to die in this house. I wonder whether they are not finding fault with the house in the hope that I would dispose it off for a low price! I would like you to dispel all such ideas in them."

Anand and Vinod readily agreed to their father's wish. However, Vivek had other views. "Father, we're convinced where you went wrong. You may not be able to change your attitude towards your relations. You can't be harsh to them; that's your nature. I would, therefore, suggest that henceforth we shall look after your business; but you shouldn't interfere with our way of working."

That made Roopchand contemplate for a long time. He thought it advisable not to interfere in the way his sons conducted the



business. He only wished that they would desist from changing the name of his shop. A new establishment might not enjoy the turnover of the old shop. He decided upon a strategy. He told his sons that he would keep himself away from his business.

Vivek came up with a suggestion. "It would be better if only one of us attended to the business, instead of all of us putting our heads together. So, you may choose one of us and hand over the business to him."

"All three of you are equally capable," said Roopchand.



"Whoever fulfils my ambition, let him take over the business. You yourself may decide who among you should take over. The other two may then carry on their own business. I shall help you do that."

The three youngsters discussed the issue amongst themselves and decided that instead of starting anything new, all three should carry on their father's business. They could not think of any other alternative.

"I can well realise your predicament," Roopchand comforted his sons. "You are not able to

take ■ decision by yourselves. I've thought of a way out. I shall put to you ■ question. If anyone of you can give me a satisfactory answer, I shall hand over my business to him."

All three of them agreed to their father's proposition. "Suppose the god were to appear before you suddenly and ask you what boon you would like to receive," Roopchand queried, "what boon would you ask for?"

"I shall ask him to give me all the wealth in this world," said Anand.

"I shall wish to be the person who produces all the wealth in this world," said Vinod.

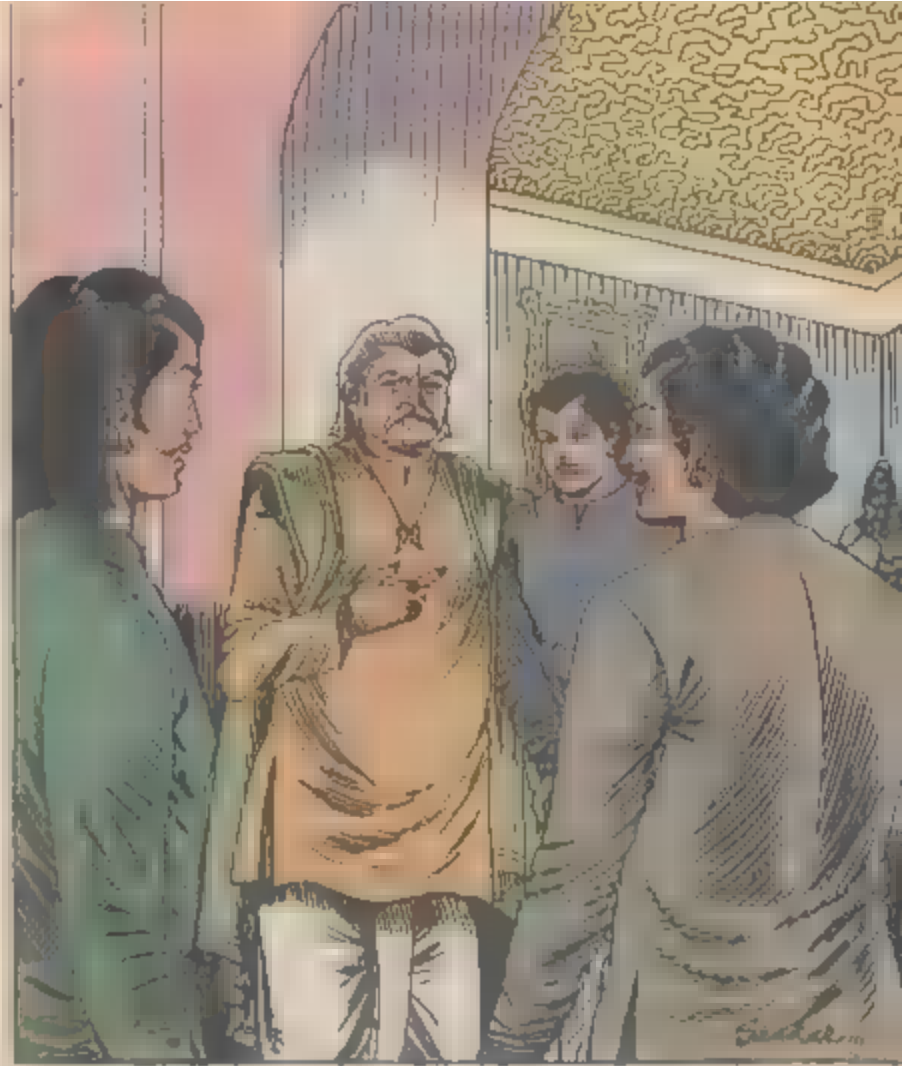
Roopchand found his youngest son silent and pensive. "Are you still contemplating what to ask of the Lord?" he asked Vivek.

"What's there to think so much?" said Vivek. "If god were really to appear before me, I shall ask him to bless me to remain a respectable gentleman."

"I don't understand you, Vivek," remarked Roopchand. "Would you explain?"

"I want everybody in this world to lead a peaceful life," said Vivek.

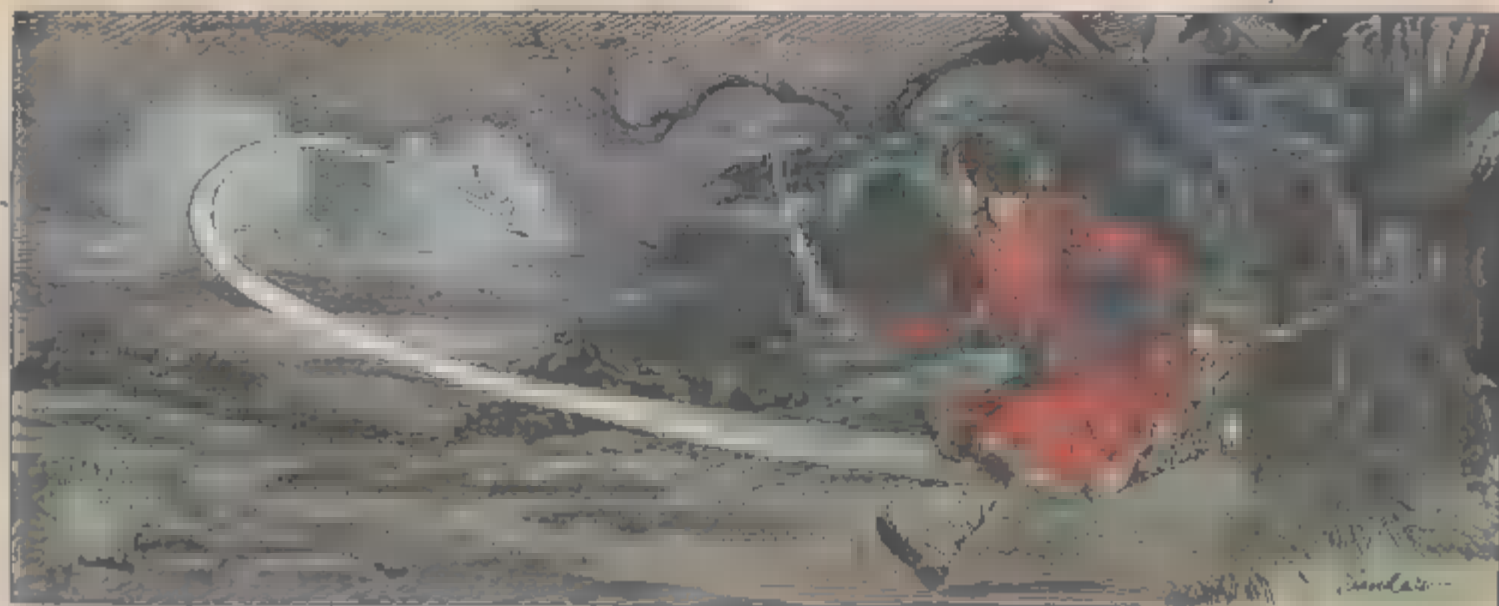
Both Anand and Vinod laughed aloud as if they had just heard something very foolish. However, their father complimented Vivek and asked him to take charge of his business, much to the chagrin of Anand and Vinod. "I've studied each one of you," said Roopchand. "All of you are clever. But in business, you've to be a little selfish. You won't know this so easily. From the answers given by each one of you, I could assess who is both clever ■ well as selfish. And that's why I entrusted the business to Vivek."



The vampire stopped his narration with that and turned to Vikramaditya. "O King! Roopchand was ■ clever merchant himself, but he had implicit faith in his relations and gave them whatever they asked for, and thus suffered loss in his business. He then decided to hand it over to his sons, and ultimately chose Vivek for the job. Don't you think both Roopchand and Vivek were of the same nature? Vivek wished that everybody on earth should enjoy peace. That shows he cared for others, didn't he? That doesn't make him selfish. If so, don't you

think Roopchand made the wrong choice? If you know the answer and decide not to reveal it, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!"

"People who work for a living behave differently, according to their ambition in life," replied King Vikramaditya. "Their cleverness, too, will be of different kinds. They take decisions to suit the situation. From their answers to Roopchand, it was clear that both Anand and Vinod were selfish to the core. No business would thrive on selfishness alone. There must be a limit to it. Vivek

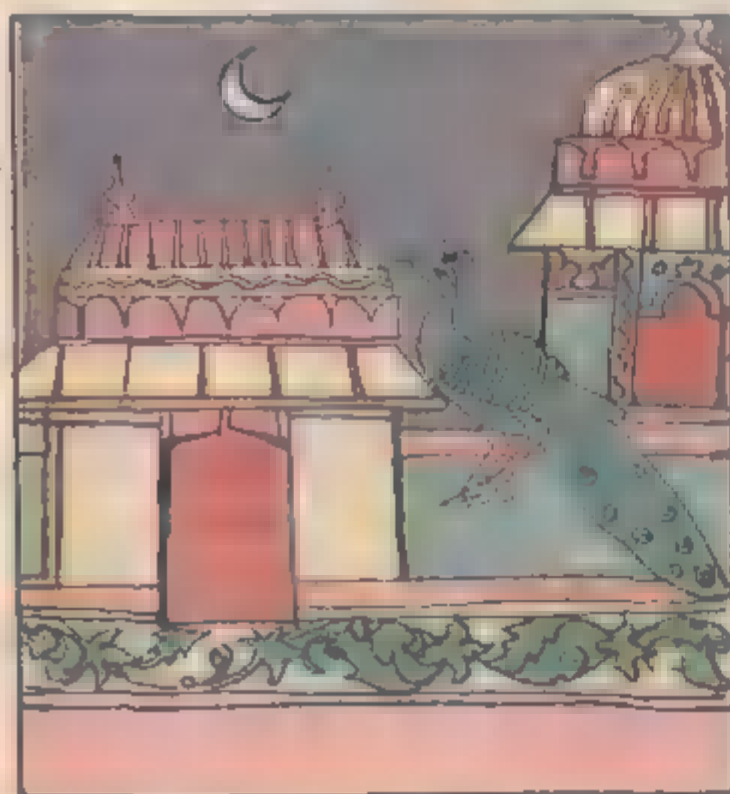


had that much selfishness a merchant needed to carry on his business. Over and above that, Vivek wanted that he should be happy and others, too, should be equally happy. That's why his father decided to hand over his business to Vivek, and not to

Anand or Vinod. His choice and decision were correct."

The vampire knew that the king had outwitted him again. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse along with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-51



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

Chatterboxes among birds

Birds are normally silent at night. Not the Babblers. They chatter during the night, and this can be heard as a loud group chant rather frequently. Some ornithologists believe that the purpose is to keep off enemies! Anyway they are the noisiest of all birds.

Another peculiar characteristic of these birds is, whatever they do, they do it jointly. They hunt for food in a team; they hatch eggs and rear the young ones in groups; they often clean one another's feathers. Try putting a single bird in a cage; the rest of the group will surround the cage, no, not to free the caged one, but to join the 'fortunate' one inside the cage! That is the team spirit shown by the Babblers. Incidentally, a group will have invariably six or seven birds—not more. So, the Babblers are popularly known as the 'Seven Sisters'!

The Jungle Babblers are nearly 10 inches (25 cm.) long. They are a dull brown in colour, with the underparts a yellowish ash. The eyelids are white with a trace of yellow. The bill and feet are onion-pink.

They rarely fly high. They build their nests on leafy branches of not very tall trees. The variety found in South India is larger in size than those in the north. Their presence gives life to jungles.



INDIA THROUGH HER LITERATURE

India is a great country which has nurtured so many languages and so many cultures through the ages. Each major language of India has a rich literature. We know more or less about the great books of the past. But we know little about the outstanding books of our own time. In these pages, Chandamama will tell you the stories of the novels of our age, written in different Indian languages. The narration will be very brief, but we hope, this will inspire our readers to read the full book in original or in translation in the future.

—Editor

ALL ABOUT A GOAT?



Can there be a novel without a distinct plot? Yes, there can be. And you will agree with this answer if you have read *Pathummayude Adu*, in Malayalam, by Vaikom Muhammad Bashir.

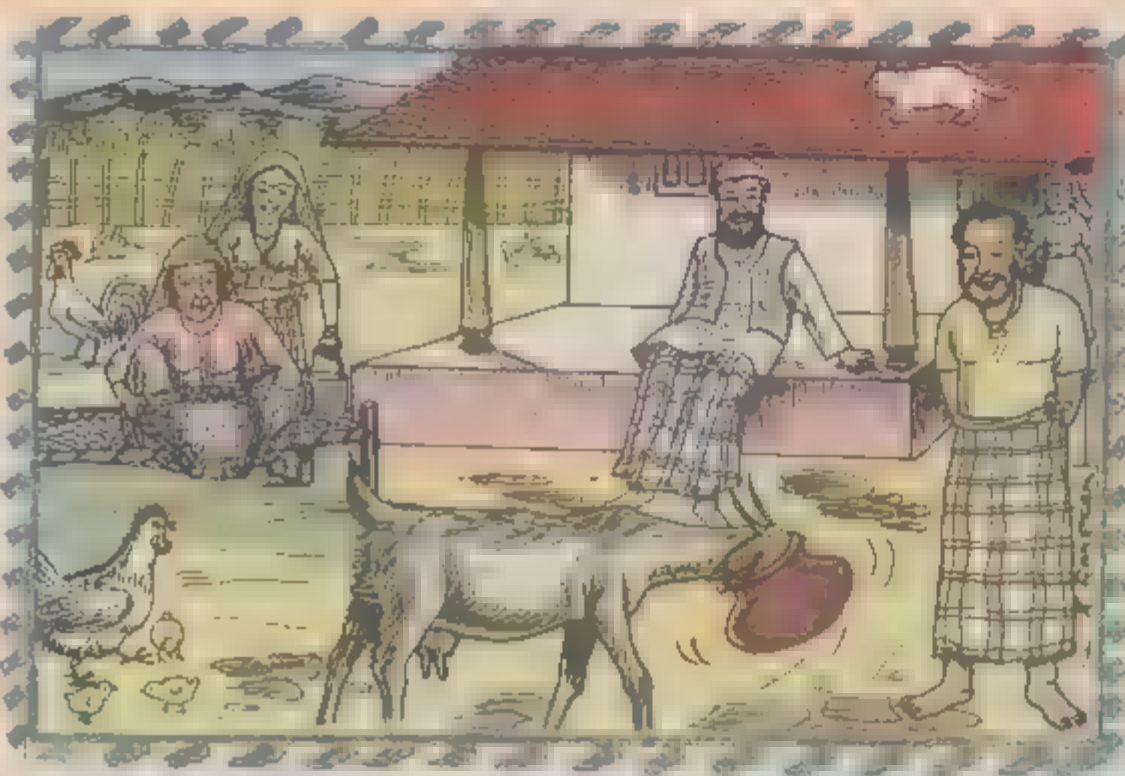
The author narrates the story in the first person. After wandering for many years, he has come back to his home in the village. He wants to settle down there for the rest of his life. He has already published several books and is well-known as a writer.

But the small house has many inmates—his mother, his two brothers, their wives and children, his unmarried youngest brother, one of his sisters and her husband, apart from a

number of cats, rats, and fowls.

As if that is not enough, yet another creature enjoys absolute free access into the house. That is a nanny goat.

The author is amazed to see the nanny goat climbing onto his bed and chewing up two books written by him! The author tolerates that, but he has



to act when the animal, not satisfied with literature, decides to have a taste of the author's blanket valued fifty rupees.

The author learns that the privileged goat belongs to his sister, Pathumma, who lives with her family in the same village. The goat is

present throughout the narration, occasionally creating bizarre situations, like thrusting her head into an earthen vessel, but unable to extricate herself from it, leaving the task of breaking the vessel and solving the problem to others.

Before long, the author's dream of a peaceful life devoted to writing is shattered. His mother, his sisters, and all the other near and dear ones request him for financial help — and each one wants that nobody else should know about it!

Pathumma has her own dreams. Her nanny goat would soon be delivered of a kid. That would mean plenty of milk from the goat. She will sell it and earn well.

At last, the nanny goat gives birth to a lovely white kid. But the relatives begin to milk her stealthily. Several members of the family, of course, receive their share of the stolen milk for their tea!

The rest of the small novel is devoted to the author's reminiscences of his childhood and the funny behaviour of his kinsmen, one of whom is never tired of threatening to leave home and join the army unless his demands are fulfilled, so on and so forth. There are also references to so many little ironies of life. For example, once the author feels quite flattered that the girls from the local High School are looking at him — a celebrated novelist! Alas, no! They are looking at a tree behind him teeming with berries!

Full of humour and written in a breezy style, the novel is a vivid picture of a Muslim family in Kerala — and the small hopes and desires that mark the lives of the poor folk. Vaikom Muhammad Bashir (born 1910) is a trend-setter in Malayalam fiction of our time.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. When was Delhi made the capital of India? Till then where was the capital located?
2. What is the new name of Rhodesia?
3. Which is the oldest among games?
4. Who was the first woman President of the Indian National Congress?
5. When was the first robot created?
6. Who coined the greeting 'Jai Hind'?
7. In what other role does the Vice-President of India function?
8. What is the special characteristic of zebras?
9. The history of which kings is contained in '*Rajtarangini*'?
10. When was the first postage stamp released in India?
11. Which chocolate firm built a village for itself?
12. Which is the National flower of Italy?
13. Who is the author of '*Geeta Govinda*'?
14. '*Das Capital*' is one of the great classics of the world. Who wrote it?
15. Why was the White House (the residence of the U.S. President) painted White?

ANSWERS

1. 1911; Calcutta
2. Zimbabwe
3. Polo. It was played in Persia (now Iran) in the first century A.D.
4. Dr. Annie Besant. She presided over the 1917 session of the Congress.
5. A firm in the U.S.A., called Unimation, is reported to have made the first robot in 1962, i.e., 30 years ago.
6. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
7. As the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
8. No two zebras have similar stripes.
9. The kings of Kashmir.
10. In 1852 at Karachi, which was then in India.
11. Cadbury - in Bourneville.
12. Lily
13. Jayadeva
14. Karl Marx
15. To hide the damage it sustained in a fire accident.

A SILENT EXCHANGE



Long ago there lived a king. One day, as he held his court, a messenger was ushered in. He was the envoy of another king. The stranger bowed to the king, walked up to the throne, and drew a line around it with a piece of charcoal. He did not speak a single word.

"What does this mean?" asked the king.

But the stranger made no reply.

The ruler was greatly perplexed. He ordered his ministers and councillors to explain the meaning of the line around him. But alas, they only gave him a

blank look. The four wise men of the realm were then summoned but they, too, failed to interpret the message.

"Is there none in the whole of my land who is clever enough to read the meaning behind this mysterious line?" cried the king.

He was indeed very angry. He gave the four men of wisdom just three days to find someone who could explain the meaning of the line. If they failed, their heads would be chopped off, he warned them. They looked at the messenger hoping to get some clue. But he remained silent and stood still as a stone.



Helpless, the four wise men set out to do the king's bidding. They knocked at every door and, on the third day, came to a house on the outskirts of the kingdom. They did not have to knock on its door, for, it was wide open. They entered and as they did so, there was a soft tinkling of bells.

"What could this mean?" they wondered.

Suddenly, they saw in the room a pestle suspended from the roof and pounding wheat in a mortar all by itself. No one was there. Surprised, they moved into the second chamber.

It was quite empty, save for a hanging cradle that was rocking, again all by itself. Their hearts began to beat faster. They went out and looked at the roof. To their amazement, they saw corn laid out on it to dry. Birds were wheeling over it but could not peck it, for a fan of palm leaves fixed onto the roof was swaying over it from side to side. There was no wind, not a leaf stirred on the trees, and yet the fan swayed and kept the winged creatures away.

"Are we in a land of magic?" they marvelled and hurried once again into the house.

The little bells softly tinkled once more and the faint sound of clickety clack—clackety click came from inside, which they had failed to observe during their first entry. It led them to the last and innermost chamber. There they saw a poor man working at his loom.

"Good evening, friends," he greeted them with a smile.

"What enchantment is there in this house? The pestle is pounding, the cradle is rocking, and the fan is swaying, all by themselves!" exclaimed the wise lot.

"It's most simple. I'm doing all that myself!" replied the weaver, in a casual way.

"How can you do all that when you're sitting here and weaving? Please don't joke with us; we're on a serious mission," said the bewildered men.

"All the three things are attached to the loom by strings. As I weave, the strings move and set the pestle, the cradle, and the fan in motion. Simple, isn't it?" explained the weaver.

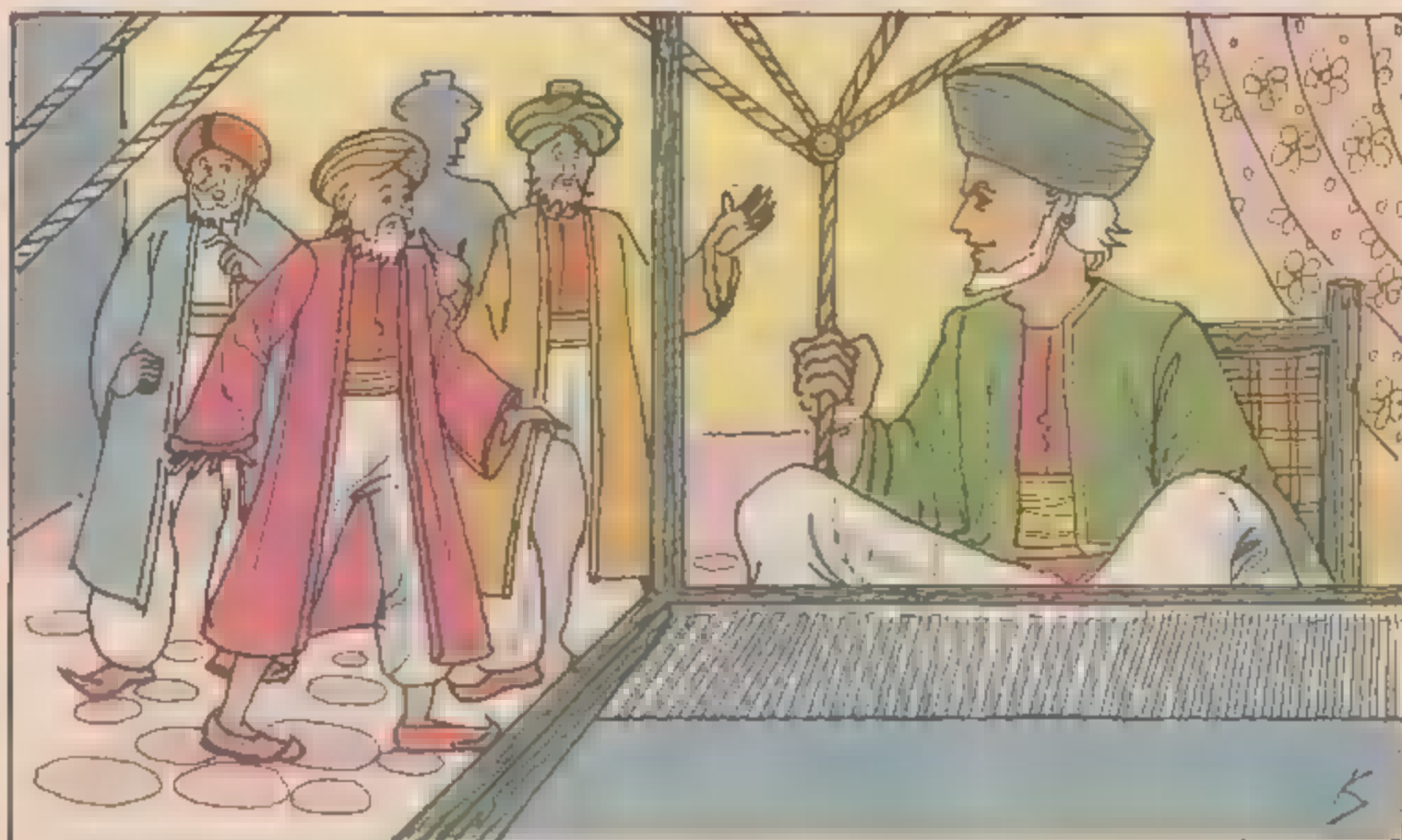
"But as we enter and come out, little bells tinkle softly!" observed one of the four.

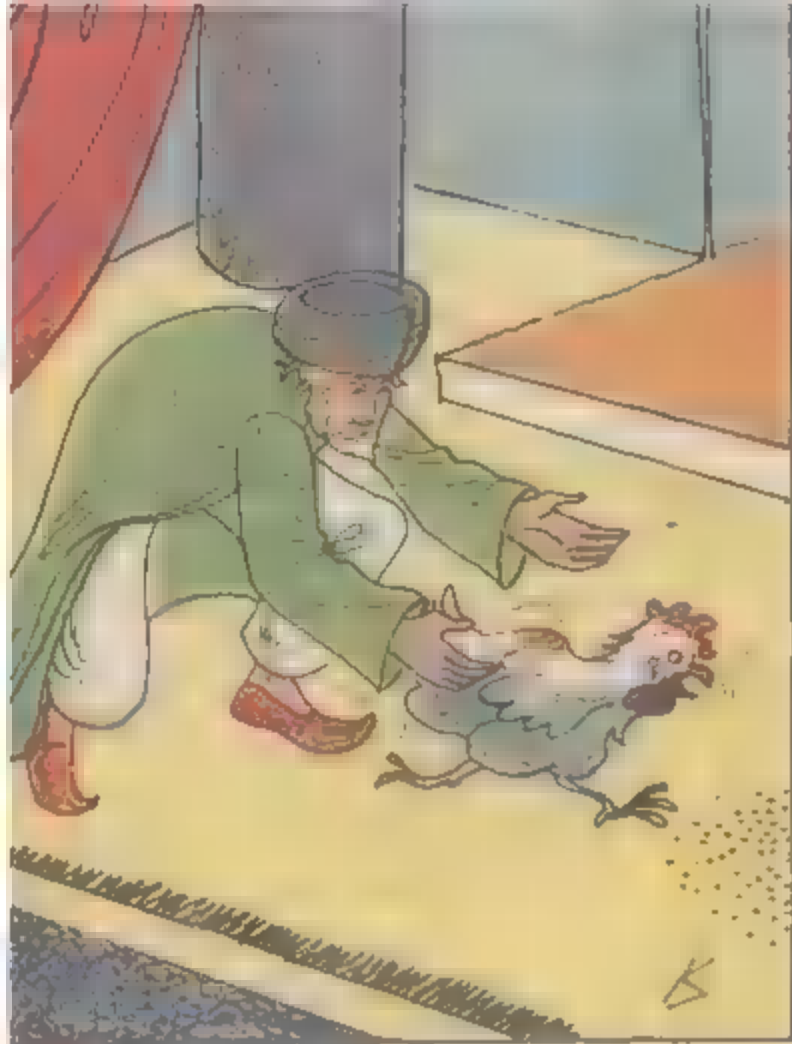
"Yes, they do," replied the

weaver with a smile. "For, under the wooden board at the threshold are again a series of strings which are attached to these bells hanging here in front of me. As you step on the plank, the strings move and bells tinkle telling me that someone has entered."

The wise men marvelled at the ingenuity of the simple weaver. A sense of humility came over them. For, they themselves were not really as wise as they appeared to be, after all! They saluted him and explained the purpose of their wandering.

The weaver fell into a deep reverie. He then picked up some





toys his grandson loved to play with, caught hold of a chicken from the backyard, and dropped them all into a bag hung over his shoulder.

The wise men were indeed surprised. But they hastened to the palace without a word, accompanied by the weaver. They must present themselves before the king by morning the next day.

In the morning, the whole court awaited in pin-drop silence. The weaver closely looked at the line drawn around the throne and at the messenger.

Taking the toys out of the bag he threw them at his feet. The envoy, in response, brought out from his pocket ■ handful of corn and flung it on the floor.

The king twitched his moustache, but could not understand what was going on.

The weaver only smiled and, taking out the chicken, placed it right in front of the scattered grains. In no time the hungry bird pecked them all; not a grain did it leave behind.

The envoy bowed to the king, ran out of the palace, mounted his horse, and sped away.

The king and his courtiers looked on in amazement.

"What's all this?" he asked impatiently.

"Your Majesty," replied the weaver, "the messenger was only trying to convey that his king had declared war on us and his soldiers will soon surround this city. That is what he meant by encircling your throne with a line."

"But," interrupted one of the wise men, "why did you throw the toys at his feet?"

"I did so to tell him that our army is far stronger than theirs

and they can never defeat us. In fact, they are mere children compared to us and it would do them good if they stayed at home and played with toys instead of waging war," replied the weaver very plainly.

"Bravo! Bravo! That makes sense!" exclaimed the king excitedly. "But what had the grains and the chicken got to do in this silent tussle?"

"Well," replied the weaver, "by throwing the grains he wanted to impress that their army is very large indeed, their soldiers as numerous as the grains. I at once had the chicken peck them to the very last grain. This was a warning that if they dared to attack us, not a single soldier of theirs will go back alive."

"I'm sure he got the message,

for, didn't you all see how he fled the palace at once," added the king.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied the weaver.

"Stay with me in the palace, O good wise man, and be my minister," proposed the king.

"Your Highness, I'm happy where I am, by the side of my loom," replied the poor weaver and he took leave of the king, of course, with all the precious gifts showered on him.

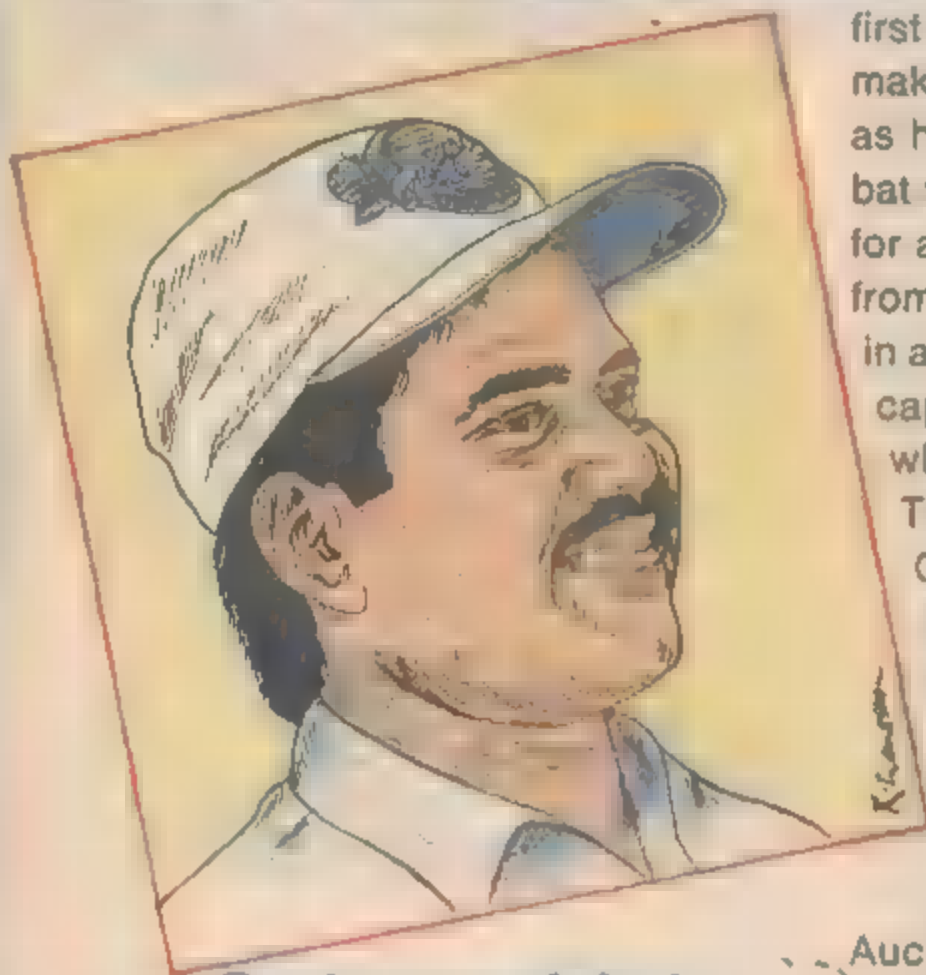
The king and his ministers wondered for long whether the strange messenger was really dumb or he came from a land where everyone kept mum!

Perhaps the wise weaver could have answered that, too, if asked.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das



Sports Snippets

Century on debut

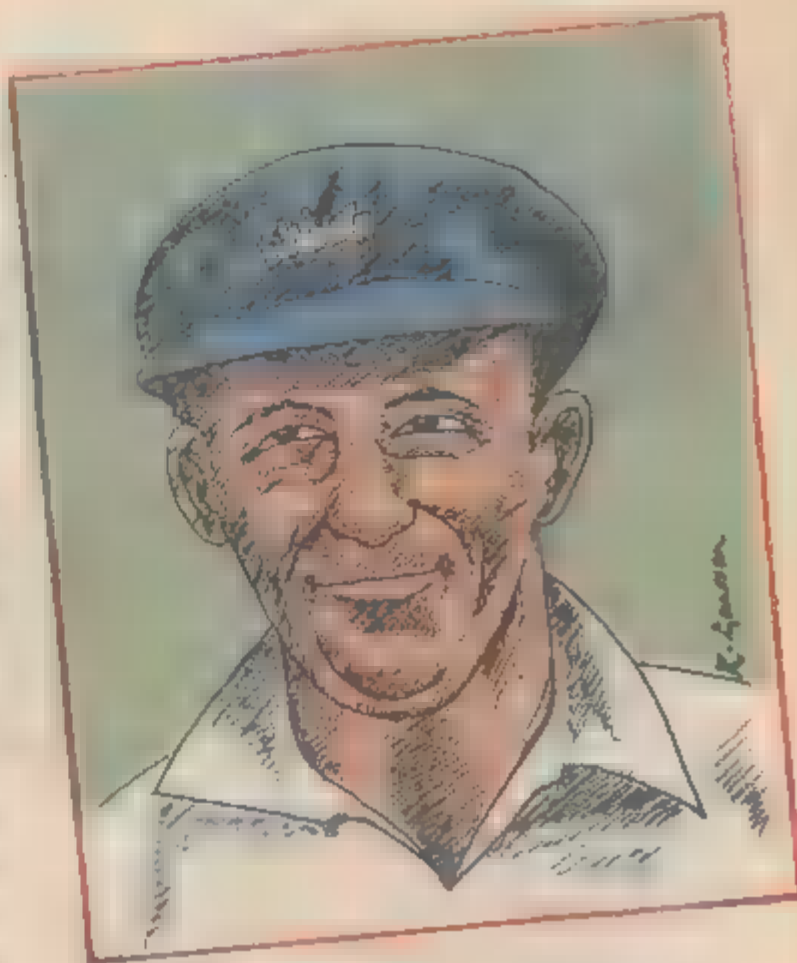
Praveen Amre has joined eight other Indian "greats" who scored a century on their Test debut. This happened on November 15 at the Kingsmead grounds in Durban in the first Test that India played during their South African tour. In all the matches that India played till then, Amre was given a place in the team, but only as the twelfth man, sitting out in the pavilion and watching his mates play. However, when he got his Test cap for the

first time, he decided that he would make it memorable for himself as well as his selectors. He was called in to bat when India were 4 wickets down for a mere 38. His 103 rescued India from being routed. The match ended in a draw. He was greeted first by his captain, Mohammad Azharuddin, who was the immediately previous Test cap to score a century (110) in Calcutta against England in 1984-85. The first Indian to earn this distinction was Lala Amarnath (118 against England in Bombay in 1933-34). Surinder Amarnath emulated his father (124) against New Zealand in

Auckland in 1975-76. The five others are Deepak Shodhan, (110-1952-53), Kripal Singh (100 not out—1955-56); Abbas Ali Baig (112-1959), Hanumant Singh (105-1963-64) and G.R. Visvanath (137-1969). Amre said of his feat: "A century on Test debut was a dream I have cherished since the time I held a bat for the first time. Every friend of mine had said that I would do it, and I am proud I did not let them down." He has "dedicated" his century to "my coach, teachers of the school I went to, my parents, and my friends."

The "oldest" cap

The Durban Test witnessed another record, when Omar Henry was included in the South African team. Aged 40 years and 300 days, he is the oldest ever cricketer to earn his Test cap, and the first non-white to play in a Test for that country. He is of Malay origin. His first cricket bat was a gift from a white woman, and he began playing in an area near Cape Town meant for people of mixed races. Because of apartheid, he joined a multi-racial club in Cape Town and played against white players. This left-arm spinner and middle-order batsman has over 700 wickets and 13,000 runs to his credit in first class cricket. But his Test debut was made in Durban, which came about after apartheid was abolished. "I never thought it would happen in my time. It's a reward and an honour," he commented.



Not a single cap

Speaking of Test caps, the legendary Bradman is not able to lay his hands on any one of the 52 green caps that he collected during his 20-year Test career for a public exhibition in Adelaide. Sir Donald handed over all of the 'Bradman memorabilia' to the Mortlock Library six years ago, and they include blazers, autographed bats, photographs, trophies, newspaper clippings, etc—but not one Test cap, all because he followed the tradition of throwing the cap to the cheering crowd every time he returned to the pavilion after one feat or another. He collected 6,996 runs in Tests at an astonishing average of 99.94, which made him a legend in cricket history.

AT THE END OF THE ROPE, A COW!



Muthayya of Muthialpet was a god-fearing person. He regularly visited the local temple, morning and evening, offering worship for a long time. He soon became a familiar figure at the temple, which attracted a large congregation of devotees, especially during festival days.

He was not considered a man of wealth, but he never failed to donate money for the various festivals—an example quoted by the temple authorities whenever

they set out for collection from the devotees in that small town. The rich *mirasdars* of the place listened to all such references about Muthayya with a tinge of jealousy—especially those praising his philanthropic attitude. They were left to wonder how an unassuming person like Muthayya came to possess enough money to make such donations religiously. Naturally, tongues wagged.

“We’ve all seen him grow up

these twenty years ever since his father died when he was just a lad of fifteen," remarked Ramalingam to Lakshmipathi. The two were returning from the temple one evening and had watched Muthayya being mobbed by an admiring crowd. "And what was his father?" A petty shop-keeper!"

"Oh! You're referring to Rangayya?" said Lakshmipathi. "But he was very honest and no spendthrift—unlike Muthayya. Rangayya must have saved a lot and this man is just spending it, making donations left and right."

"The way he's running his shop," wondered Ramalingam, "I'm not sure how he's making all that money. He never sits in the shop. And his nephew who manages the shop—does the boy know any business at all?"

"I wish somebody knew where Muthayya spends all his time during the day!" Lakshmipathi replied, casually hinting some suspicion about Muthayya.

In fact, he had reasons to do so. The people were, of late, complaining of petty thefts from their homes, and these incidents were becoming frequent, too.



Yet, none of them had succeeded in catching the culprit, nor was suspecting anyone in particular. They mentioned the incidents to Muthayya, too, as their well-wisher and he expressed his sympathy with them. "Better to be careful!" was his advice to everybody.

The people were extra careful, still the thefts continued. One day, Sabhapati, the grocery shop owner, lost a bag of rice. When he went to the shop to open it, he found it already open. At first he wondered whether he did not close the shutters properly the previous night before he went



home. Strangely, he found everything intact and in order—except one bag of rice. He enquired in the neighbourhood, but was told that none had heard any strange noise any time in the night. He checked up with his customers; no, none of them had passed that way the previous night. They even thought Sabhapati would be none the worse for the loss of just one bag of rice ■ they all had the doubt whether he was not charging them a higher price than other grocers.

A few days later, Muthayya organised poor-feeding at his place, saying he wanted to do a

good turn on his birthday. All the people who partook of the meal had a word of praise for the sumptuous food he served.

When Ramalingam and Lakshmipathi heard about the poor-feeding, they were smitten by jealousy because that was something which they themselves had never thought of while celebrating *their* birthday. They surmised that Muthayya must have used at least ■ bag of rice for the poor-feeding.

“Did you say ■ bag of rice?” A bell rang in Lakshmipathi. “You remember, Sabhapati’s shop was burgled and a bag of rice was stolen? Could that be...?”

“Let’s go and find out whether he had bought anything from Sabhapati,” said Ramalingam.

“No, Muthayya didn’t buy anything from me,” said Sabhapati. “In fact, I haven’t seen him for many days, and he’s not one of my customers. He lives far away and doesn’t come this side that often.”

The two mirasdars were curious to know how Muthayya would have managed that much rice but felt ashamed either to ask him straight or find out from

other shopkeepers. So, they decided to keep quiet for the time being.

Lakshmipathi maintained a few cows and buffaloes. Many of the residents regularly bought milk from him and he utilised every opportunity to fleece them by frequently raising the price. As they had nowhere else to go, they continued to get from him their daily need of milk.

His servants would take the animals for grazing every morning. One day, the man who had taken them to the fields slept away for a long while and did not realise that one of the cows had broken the tether and strayed into the streets. In fact, he did not notice the animal was missing till the next morning when the time came for milking them. Panic set in and word went to the mirasdar. Had the cow been stolen at night? If so, who would have dared to enter the cattle-shed and led the animal all through the big compound without being heard or seen by someone?

After detailed questioning, the servant confessed how he had been careless during the day and how the cow might have broken



away from the group. Now, where does one go in search of a cow in a town like Muthialpet? The same servant was despatched on a mission—to walk along every street, calling out the name of the cow, and wait for a response. Lakshmipathi, who was very angry with the servant, warned him not to get back without the cow.

One whole day passed. There was no trace of the cow, nor the servant. The second day was not different from the first day. The sun was about to set on the third day, when the servant rushed in, all excited. "The cow! I've found



the cow!"

"Where?" asked Lakshmipathi, anxiously. "If you had found it, why didn't you bring it?"

"Master! The cow is in Muthayya's house. He won't allow me to take it with me," the man replied apologetically.

"Muthayya!" exclaimed Lakshmipathi. "Muthayya, of all persons? Muthayya stealing my cow? Muthayya, a thief?" Lakshmipathi wondered—could he have also stolen a bag of rice from Sabhapati's shop? If that was true, then the ■■■ must be capable of stealing even a cow!

Without wasting his time,

Lakshmipathi made his way to Muthayya. "What's this I hear? You've my cow here? Why did you steal it? We all took you to be ■ respectable person and not ■ petty thief!" He did not mince words.

"Sir, you've got everything wrong," Muthayya responded, politely. "I didn't steal the cow; I don't know whether it's *your* cow. And I'm not any thief. And speaking of stealing, aren't you stealing money from your customers? Remember, they haven't raised a word of protest whenever you raised the price of milk—and that, too, every now and then. What justification do you have in fleecing the people? If and when you prove that the cow is yours, you can take it back. Till then it will be mine, and will remain here." Muthayya sounded harsh with the arrogant mirasdar.

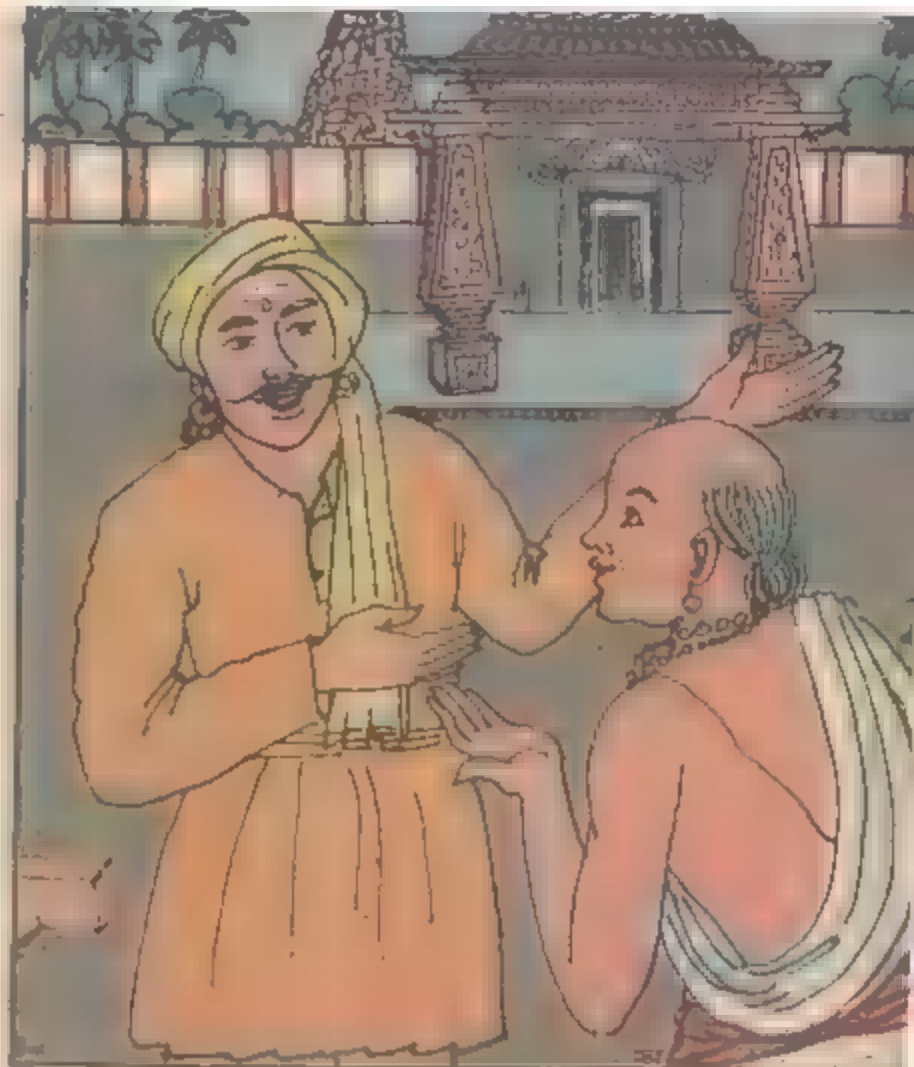
Lakshmipathi went back home and contemplated. How could he prove to Muthayya that the cow was his? His own word was not enough; and Muthayya might not believe if he were to ask his servants to swear. He was also not certain how many of those

who bought milk from him and seen his cattle would be able to identify the cow.

After thinking for a long while, Lakshmipathi came to a decision and took the advice of Ramalingam. "Yes, Lakshmipathi, what you say is right. You must ask the temple priest to mediate. Muthayya will not reject whatever advice the *pujari* gives. That seems to be the only solution."

The priest had only good words to say about Muthayya. He agreed to speak to him the next time Muthayya came to the temple for worship. Evening came and Muthayya was promptly present in the temple at *aarti* time. As he was distributing *prasad* to the devotees, the *pujari* came to Muthayya and asked him to wait for him. He thought that the priest might be wishing to talk to him about the impending festival. So, he was really surprised when the *pujari* began mentioning Lakshmipathi's cow.

Muthayya told him how the mirasdar was fleecing his customers, just as Sabhapati was doing with his own customers, much to the suffering of the people. He agreed to meet Laksh-



mipathi in the presence of the *pujari* and the devotees the next evening, after *aarti* time.

The priest told the devotees what had happened between Lakshmipathi and Muthayya and how they wanted a mediation in their presence.

Lakshmipathi insisted that his cow had been stolen and it was now in Muthayya's house. However, he was careful not to call Muthayya the thief.

"I'm not a thief, my friends," protested Muthayya. "How could I be, when I did not steal anything? I was walking along the street the other night and

found a long rope lying on the ground. If I left it there, I was afraid someone might step on it, trip, fall down, and injure himself. So, I wound it in my hand and took it home. I never knew there was a cow at the other end till I reached home! There you're! I never stole the cow!"

Muthayya saw that everyone was laughing. "No, you never stole the cow!" One of the devotees stood up and reassured him.

He continued: "I didn't hide the animal. It was there in the courtyard all along, and I didn't even milk it once. I didn't also know that the cow belonged to Lakshmipathi till he came for it. And then I wanted to teach him a lesson. You all know what it is. I wish he doesn't fleece you any more. He was all the while *stealing* from your purse, wasn't he?"

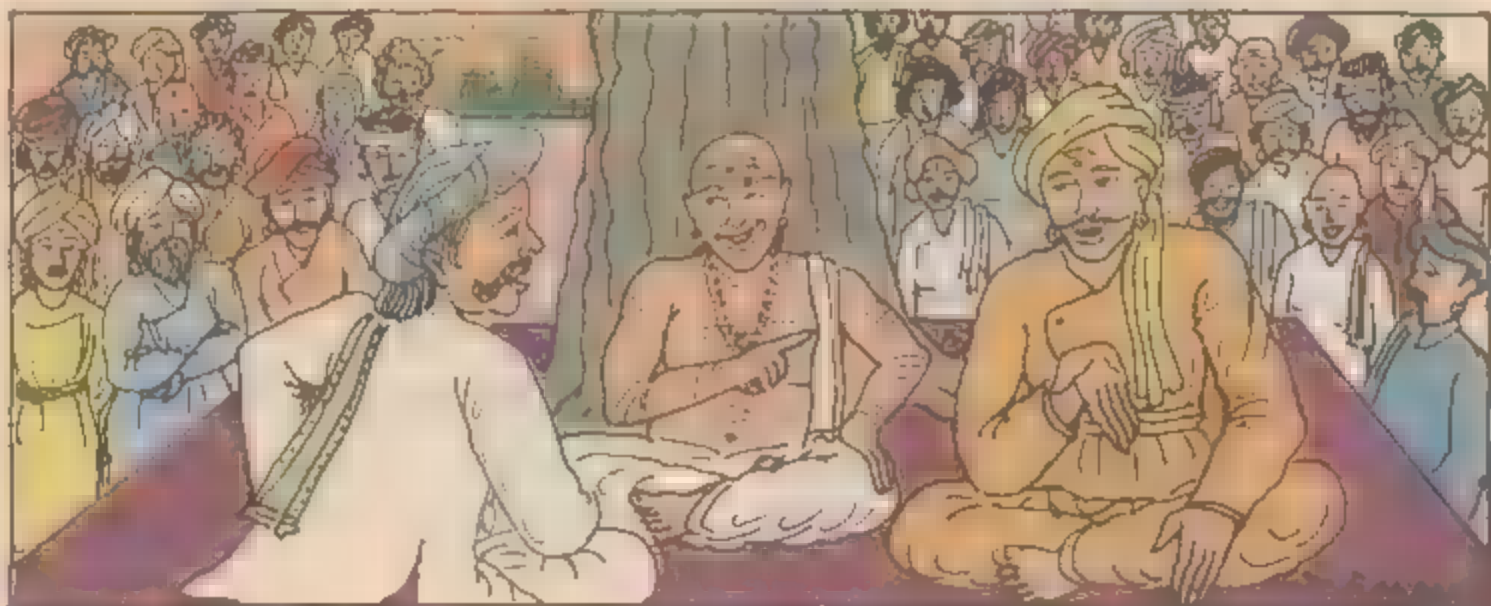
"Yes! Yes!" the devotees

shouted in unison. "He was. And You've taught him a lesson!"

"Sir, you may send your servant to take the cow away," said Muthayya, turning to Lakshmipathi.

"Thank you, Muthayya," said Lakshmipathi, as he went to him and took his hands in his. "I'm so sorry I had all that misunderstanding." Together they went to receive *prasad* and seek the *pujari's* blessings.

Postscript: You are keen to know about the bag of rice, aren't you? It was the act of a thief who, unable to carry it on his head or shoulder, had left it on the road. Muthayya happened to go that way and was surprised to see the bag. He wanted to save it from any thief, and so carried it home. When there was no claimant for some days, he organised a feast for the poor! He did not use it for his own meals.



CHANGES IN CHINA

The fall of Communism in the Soviet Union and the break-up of the former U.S.S.R. in 1991 have fanned winds of change in other Communist countries, like China.

The Communist Party of China held its 14th National Congress last October, when it amended the country's constitution to bring in reforms based on a socialist market economy. China has all along been described as a country behind the 'bamboo curtain', never letting in any foreign capital, resources, or technology. All this will change now. The Congress decided that China should develop economic and technological exchange and cooperation with other countries. In other words, China has opted for "opening to the outside world."

The Congress felt that the country was suffering from "outmoded ideas" which were hampering development of the economic structure. The 26,000-word report presented by the



Party General Secretary pointed out that wherever market forces had been given full play, the economy was vigorous and had developed in a sound way. The report said: "Reform is also a revolution—a revolution whose goal is to liberate the productive forces."

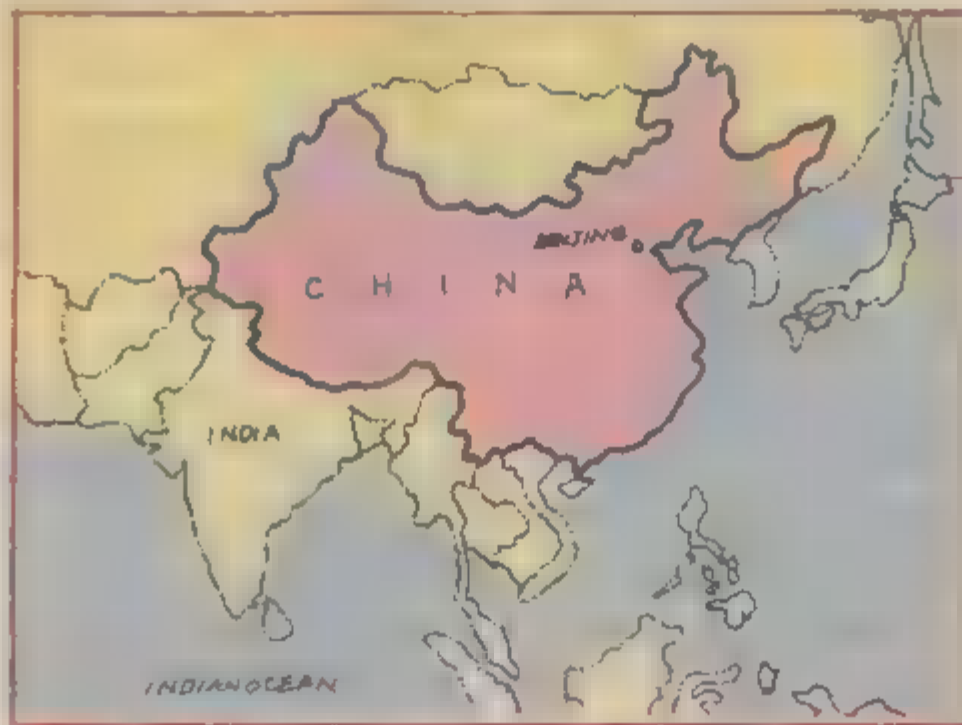
The decision of the Congress had been hailed as the "second Chinese revolution". The first one was when the Communist Party came to power in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong. His right hand man then was Mr. Deng Xiaoping, who really came to prominence in 1978, after the passing away of Mao two years earlier. A dominant force in the party, he supervised China's drive for modernisation and restructuring of the economy. He retired from the Politburo (central committee) in 1987, after presiding over the 13th National Congress of the Party. He does not hold any official position in the Party.

However, he has been leading

a silent revolution and, despite his ageing 88 years, he began a campaign a year ago for faster, bolder moves toward a market economy. Called "Deng's Theory", it aims at ushering in the stablest and most prosperous era in the modern history of China. What the recent National Congress had done was to officially

accept this theory.

China's modern-day 'legend' did not attend the Congress, but on the concluding day, the 'patriarch' made a brief appearance to meet the members of the Politburo, about half of whom are around 50 years. He expects such 'young blood' to ensure that his policies survive him.



Chinese history records the rule of the Shang dynasty between the 18th and 12th centuries B.C. It became an empire in the 3rd century B.C., when the ruling Han dynasty built the Great Wall (1,450-mile: 2,250 km long and 8 m: 25 ft. high defensive fortification). The Qin dynasty came to power after the 3rd century A.D., followed by the Tang dynasty (7th-10th centuries), Song dynasty (10th-13th centuries) and the Qing dynasty till 1912, when Sun Yat-sen ousted the rulers and set up a republic. He was succeeded by Gen. Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang (national party). During World War II (1939-45), Japan occupied parts of China, but after the Japanese defeat in the War, the Communists brought the whole country under their control. On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was born.



VEER HANUMAN

28

(At the instance of Jambava, Hanuman flies to the Himalayas and brings back an entire mountain full of herbal plants. The breeze they cause revives Rama and Lakshmana. The Vanara soldiers enter Lanka city at night and set fire to mansions and palaces. More Rakshasas and their leaders come to grief in the battle that ensues. Indrajit thinks up a new strategy.)

After reaching the Himalayas, Hanuman searched for the four herbs that would help revive Rama and Lakshmana from their stupor. He came upon several herbs and was unable to decide which ones would be useful. So, he decided to pluck the mountain itself and carry it to Lanka. When the Vanaras saw

Hanuman coming with the mountain in his palm, they shouted for joy. He alighted on the ground and placed the mountain in front of his elders and paid obeisance to them.

The herbal plants spread their fragrance all over. That was enough to revive Rama and Lakshmana; and both of them

INDRAJIT'S STRATEGY



arrogance. So, we need not expect another attack from his side for some time. We must take advantage of the situation and try to enter the city along with some of the musclemen among our soldiers."

That night, the Vanara soldiers managed to enter the city. The Rakshasas ran away for their lives when they saw waves and waves of Vanaras spreading to different parts of the city. The Vanara soldiers had taken lighted torches with them. They set fire to the mansions and palaces on the way. Loud cries rose from every nook and corner. The Rakshasas were thus forced to fight with the Vanaras inside the city itself.

"Proceed to Ravana's palace!"
Sugriva's next command. In no time, the Vanara soldiers made their way there and entered the palace. Ravana was infuriated. He called in the two sons of Kumbhakarna—Kumbha and Nikumbha—and asked them to drive away the Vanaras. They were accompanied by Yupaksha, Sonitaksha, Prajamsa, and Kambha.

In the fight that ensued,

got up from their stupor. Along with them got up several Vanara soldiers, who got back their life. For that matter, even those Rakshasas, who were lying dead there, came back to life.

After the herbs had done what they were expected to do, Hanuman carried the mountain to the Himalayas and placed it back among the other mountains. On his return to Lanka, Sugriva called Hanuman by his side. "Kumbhakarna is no more; we've overcome most of Ravana's sons well. All this must have subdued Ravana and his

Angada took on Sonitaksha and broke his sword. As he went forward, several Rakshasa soldiers fell a prey to his mace. He killed Prajamsa as well. Yupaksha fell at the hands of Mainda.

During the fight between Angada and Kumbha, the Vanara leader lost his consciousness. On seeing this, Rama sent Jambava to the aid of Angada. Kumbha sent a shower of arrows to prevent the Vanaras from approaching him. Sugriva evaded the arrows and fought with Kumbha, putting an end to his life.

Nikumbha could not bear the loss of his brother. At that moment, he was fighting with Hanuman, and he gave a heavy blow on Hanuman's chest. It was just like a breeze for the Vanara hero. In turn, he hit Nikumbha on his chest and he fell down unconscious, bleeding from his mouth. After some time, he came to his senses and got up and continued his fight with Hanuman, who now found his attack unbearable and decided to put an end to him. He caught hold of Nikumbha by his legs and thrashed his head on the ground.

He gave out a last loud cry. That was his end.

When the Vanaras heard that cry, they were enthused to go forward. Soon word went to Ravana and he was really shaken at the loss of his brother's sons. He then sent the Rakshasa Maka, who was the son of Vara. He and his soldiers were defeated by Rama himself. The death of Maka on the battlefield angered Ravana, who then sent for his son, Indrajit. "It's not that easy to defeat Rama and Lakshmana," said Indrajit. "I suggest that we hold a yaga to kill them."





Indrajit went to the Nikumbala mountain and started the *yaga* on a grand scale. For the *homa* ceremony, he did not wear the sacred *darbha* grass. Instead, he consecrated the *homa kunda* with various arms and weapons. He sacrificed a black goat. From the pit rose tall flames devoid of any smoke. He took it as a good omen of his victory. He exorcised several goddesses and acquired magical powers from them. He then got into his chariot, which flew the moment he climbed it.

Soon, Indrajit reached the battlefield. He searched out

Rama and Lakshmana among the Vanara soldiers and sent arrows at them. The brothers covered the sky with arrows, but not one of them hit Indrajit. On the contrary, his arrows were falling on Rama and Lakshmana, injuring them. They wondered how they could ward off the arrows sent by Indrajit.

"Indrajit doesn't dare fight face to face. That's why he is resorting to all sorts of tricks," said Lakshmana, with anger mounting in him. "I shall not wait any longer to send Brahmastra to annihilate the entire Rakshasa army. Let me see whether he'll come out of his magic cover at least then."

Rama cautioned his brother. "It's not proper to annihilate the other Rakshasas just to kill Indrajit. Our enemy is Ravana, so let's reserve Brahmastra for him. We shall use other mighty arrows against Indrajit."

Meanwhile, Indrajit thought up another trick. He went back to Lanka and brought in his chariot a woman looking like Sita. His plan was to kill her in front of Rama and Lakshmana. He thought they might retreat once

they saw that Sita was no more.

Hanuman was waiting for Indrajit to throw a huge boulder at him. Other Vanara soldiers were with him, carrying rock pieces of different sizes. But when they saw a tearful Sita in his chariot, they all stood stock-still. Why should Indrajit bring Sita to the battlefield? They did not waste much time wondering the reason for such an act on the part of Indrajit. They decided to save Sita even at the cost of their lives.

Hanuman took on Indrajit, who was surprised to see the Vanaras attacking him despite the presence of Sita. He caught hold of the woman's hair and was about to strike her when Hanuman shouted at him. "You murderer! Should you indulge in such a sinful act? Aren't you ashamed? If you touch Sitadevi, the next moment we'll wipe out you and your army of Rakshasas. You gave us a good fight till now. You can't threaten us by showing us Sitadevi. Beware! You won't be alive for long!"

The Vanara soldiers did not wait for any orders. They engaged the Rakshasas in a fierce fight. "Isn't it for the sake of Sita



that you attacked Lanka?" shouted Indrajit. Isn't it for her sake that you killed all my brothers and my elders? I'm going to kill her in your very presence. After that, I shall kill everyone of you—Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Angada! Hey, Hanuman! Watch me kill Sita!"

Indrajit then killed the woman with his sword, twirled his moustache and gave out a loud shout of victory. Hanuman was enraged and sent a huge boulder aiming it at Indrajit's chariot. The charioteer cleverly manoeuvred the vehicle and



Indrajit was saved. However, the huge rock fell on the Rakshasa army and several soldiers were crushed underneath. The Vanara soldiers showered rock pieces and huge stones on Indrajit, but he sent arrow after arrows preventing them from falling on his chariot.

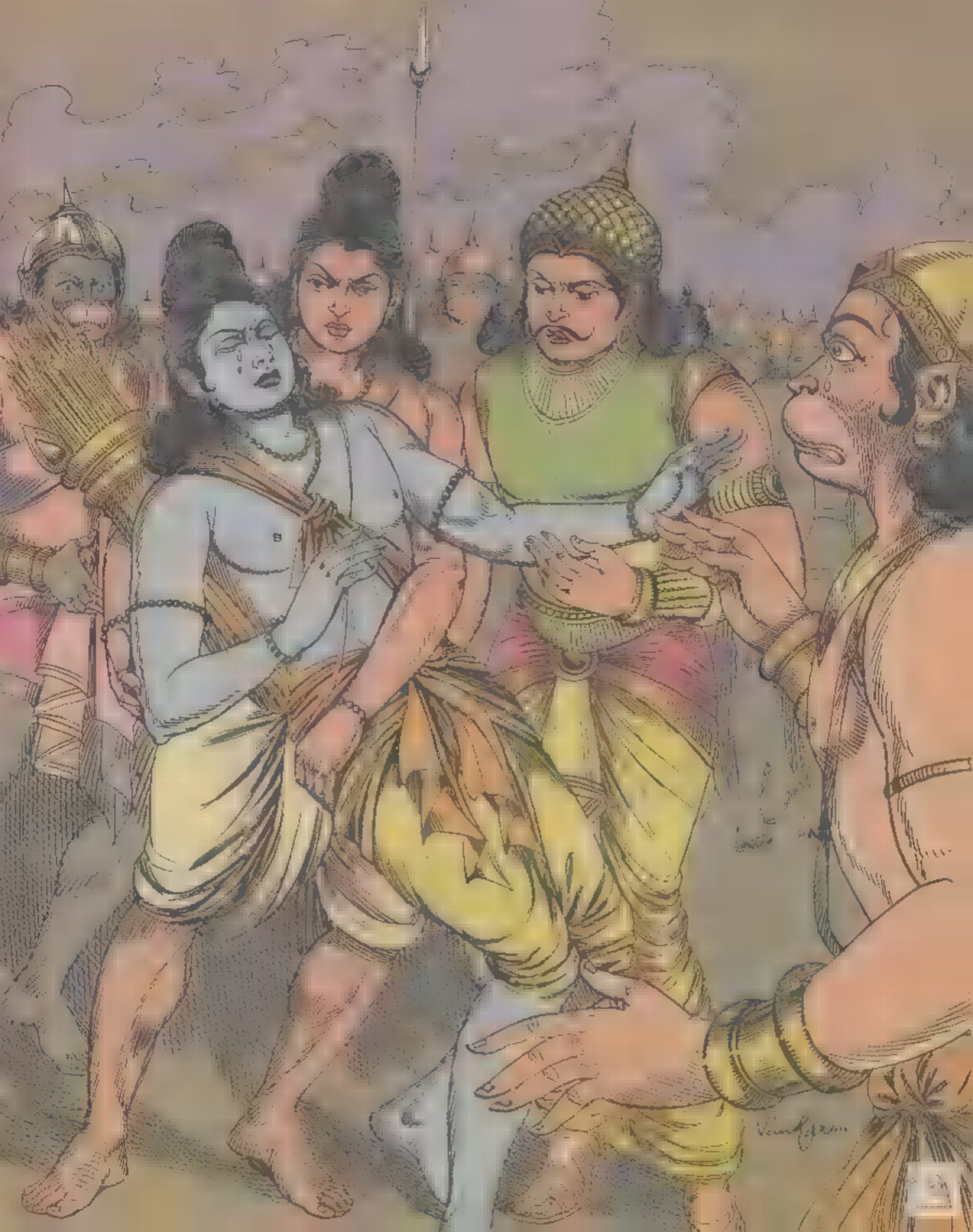
Hanuman saw that the Vanara soldiers were tiring themselves out. "Why should we fight with the Rakshasas any more? We came here to release Sita from captivity. Now, we can't achieve that purpose," said Hanuman, full of regret. "Come on, let's go

back and inform Rama and Lakshmana that Indrajit has killed Sitadevi. We shall discuss with them whether we should continue our fight or not."

When Indrajit saw Hanuman and the Vanara soldiers retreating from the battlefield, he was overjoyed. His trick had succeeded! He went back to the Nikumbala mountain to continue his yaga.

On learning from Hanuman that Sita had been killed by Indrajit, Rama was shocked beyond belief and he fainted into the hands of the Vanara soldiers, who thought they had now lost all their strength. They tried to revive Rama by sprinkling water on his face.

Lakshmana controlled his own sorrow and tried to wake up his brother by encouraging words. "You are always the one to protect righteousness. You sacrificed everything to carry out the promises of your father. You even gave up the throne, and left the kingdom to live in the forest. All the time you didn't have any ill-will against mother Kaikeyi who had caused all this misery to you. You had bravely faced all





these misfortunes. The loss of Sitadevi might be the gravest of all, but we shouldn't allow Ravana to gloat over his achievement and our loss."

Just then, Vibhishana was seen rushing to their side. "I've just heard that it was all a trick employed by Indrajit. When Ravana wishes to make Sita his wife and, therefore, doesn't want to return her to you, why should he allow her to be killed? I'm told that Indrajit performed some

yaga and managed to make ■ fake Sita and then killed her. He has now gone back to the Nikumbala mountain to continue the *yaga* so that he can arm himself with more magical powers. We must, therefore, prevent him from performing the *yaga*. I suggest we send Lakshmana to the site of the *yaga* to prevent its successful completion. We should not become victims of his tricks and deceit."

—To continue

"An anecdote is a tale," explained the English teacher. "Now, Ramu, use it in a sentence."

"I tied ■ cracker to the dog's anecdote and lit it," answered Ramu.



From Algebra to Poetry

Sarojini was just 11 then. It was nearing midnight. Her father, Aghorenath Chattopadhyay, went into her room and asked her what was holding her from her bed and sleep. "This problem in algebra! I'm not able to solve it," she said. "Shut the book now. Take it up in the morning when the mind is fresh." He gave a pat on her back and went back to his room. A well-known scientist, he could have helped her, but he did not, because he wanted his daughter to be a mathematician, and she had to rely on her own intelligence.



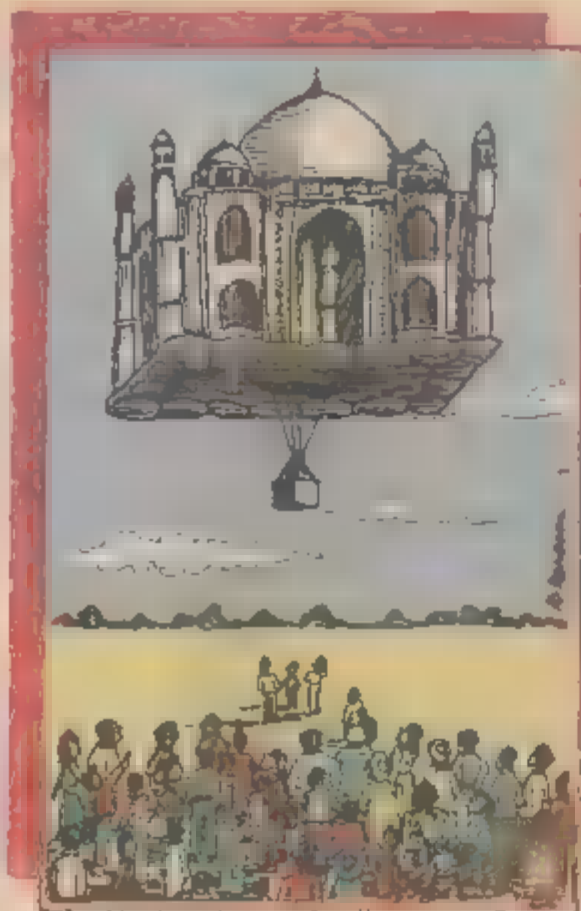
The next morning, he asked her, "Did you solve the problem?" "No, father. I shall ask my teacher," said Sarojini. She then pulled out a note-paper from her bag. "I wrote it after you went away." It was a poem.

Sarojini Chattopadhyay had the first collection of her poems published as a book when she was 13. This was the beginning of her poetic career. Only a year earlier, she had passed her Matriculation examination, first class first in the then Madras Presidency.

She married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, and soon came to be popularly called 'The Nightingale of India'. How Sarojini Naidu was drawn to the country's freedom movement is all part of India's modern history. When her name was suggested as President of the Kanpur session of the Indian National Congress in 1925, Gandhiji said: "An Indian woman will, for the first time, enjoy the highest honour in the gift of the nation. The unique honour will be hers as a matter of right."

NEWS FLASH

'MAHAL' IN A MELA



The *mela* or festival was the balloon-mela in New Delhi the other day. Nearly ten teams from Germany and the U.K., besides India, were participating in the hot-air balloon contest. The morning foggy weather was ■ damper and the "air" was not "hot" enough to give a ceremonial start to the mela. But the participants and the people who had gathered at the venue to cheer them were not disappointed, for, soon ■ 'mahal' took wings and went up in the air much to their delight. A hot-air balloon enthusiast had brought a model of the world famous Taj Mahal that flew to what is described as a

risk-free height and remained in the air till the cheers died down. However, the last word remained with Vice-President K.R. Narayanan, who recalled that one of India's Viceroys had ■ secret wish to cart the original mausoleum in Agra to England, marble by marble. Were he alive today, he would have thought of flying it, let's say, balloon by balloon!

A MACHINE FOR CRACKLING

Is there a child who does not wish to fire a cracker, especially at Diwali or Vishu? Maybe, children sometimes hesitate, because they have been forewarned of dangers. The day is not far when they will shed all fear, for, they will be able to explode crackers at arms length—yes, the arms of ■ machine. A drawing master attached to ■ school in Erode, in Tamilnadu, has fabricated this machine which has a forked arm to hold the cracker. It is detonated by the heat produced in an electric heater when current passes through it. The cracker is then hurled at ■ distance of some 20ft (6m) and it explodes. Inventor K. Anandan is now looking for a sponsor who, he hopes, will not grumble later that he has burnt his fingers even without touching a cracker!



Poisonous beauties

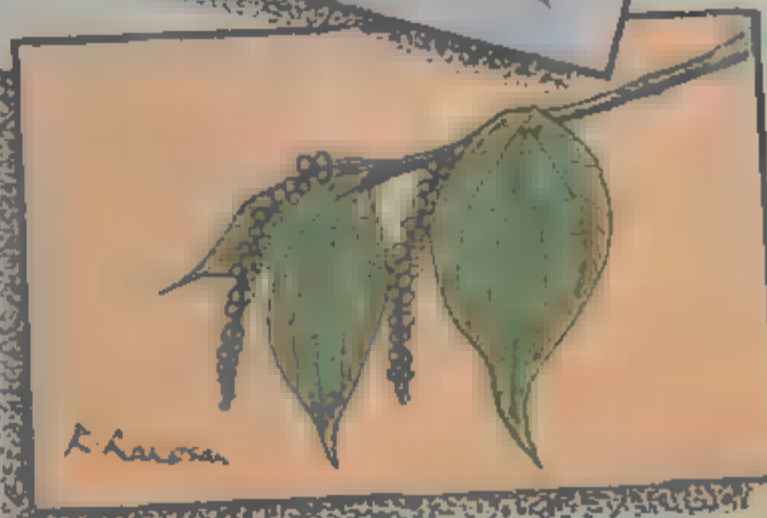
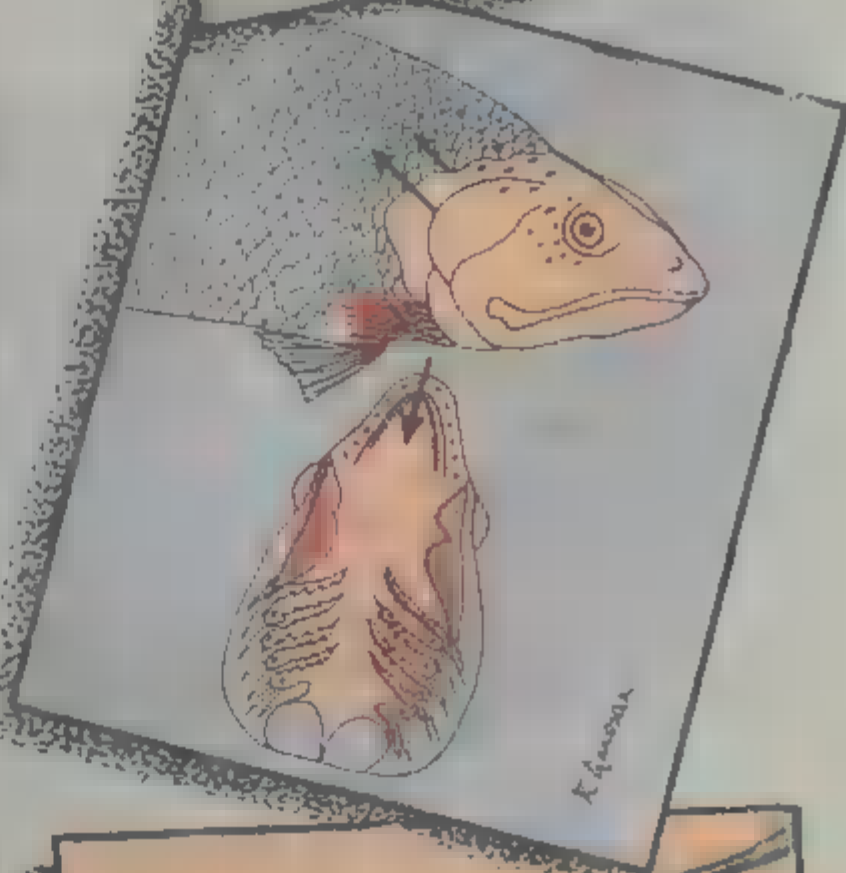
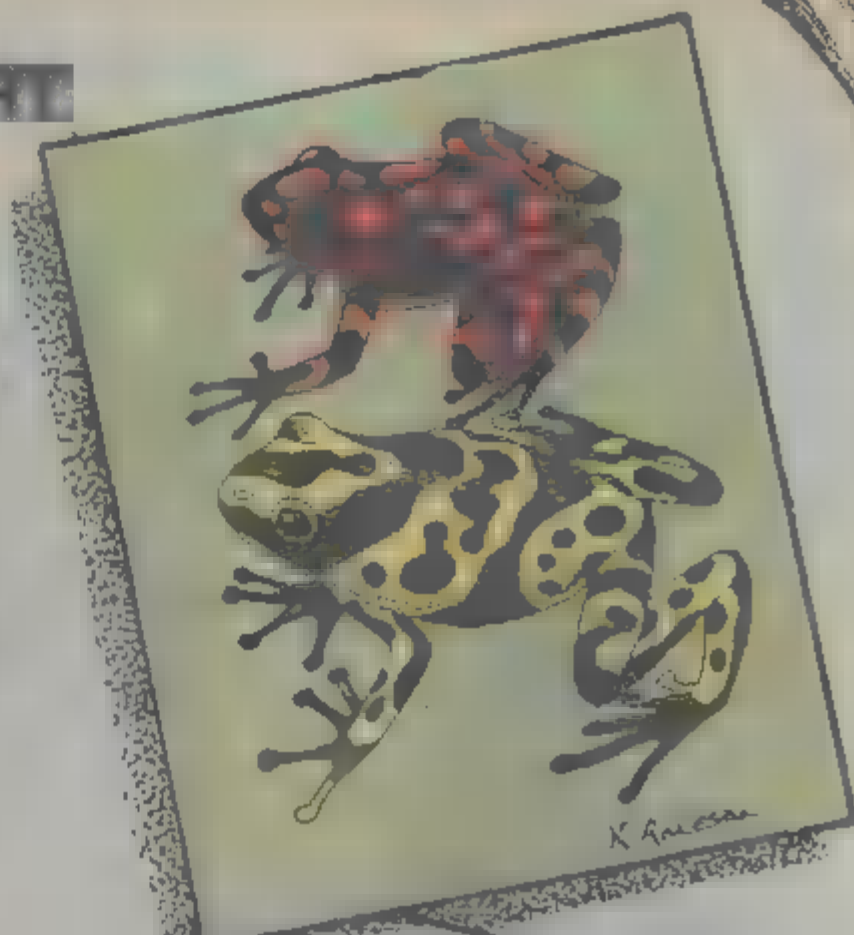
Some of the most poisonous of frogs—strangely, they are among the most beautiful and brilliantly coloured, too—can be found in the jungles of South America. The predominant colours are red and yellow, and these amphibians have also black bands or spots. The poison extracted from beneath their skin is used by the local aborigines on arrow-tips, and is capable of paralysing the victim. The bright colours help the frogs conceal themselves in their surroundings.

Breathing device

Fish need not come out of water to breathe, unlike the swimmers amongst us. They can breathe through the gills, which are feathery structures that extract the oxygen in water. The fish first takes water into its mouth. It is then forced over the gills inside the fish and later flushed out through the gill slits located on either side of the back part of the head. Tiny blood vessels in the gills extract the oxygen, which is then circulated through blood to the other parts of the body.

Earliest

The fossil of an angiosperm was discovered four years ago near Melbourne, in Australia. Scientists of Yale University, U.S.A, after long research, opined that it was 120 million years old. The plant, known as Koonwarra and resembling the black pepper plant, had one flower and two leaves.



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- Hubert Humphrey

Better were it to be unborn than to be ill-bred.

- Walter Raleigh





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